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# CHILDREN IN NEED OF SPECIAL CARE

CO-OPERATIVE SOCIAL RESEARCH

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# CO-OPERATIVE SOCIAL RESEARCH

BY

SIMMONS COLLEGE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
BOSTON COUNCIL OF SOCIAL AGENCIES
AND
THE WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL AND
INDUSTRIAL UNION

REPORT NUMBER 2

## *CHILDREN IN NEED OF SPECIAL CARE*

STUDIES BASED ON TWO THOUSAND
CASE RECORDS OF SOCIAL AGENCIES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

BY

LUCILE EAVES AND ASSOCIATES

INTRODUCTION BY C. C. CARSTENS, *Director,*
*Child Welfare League of America*

BOSTON, 1923

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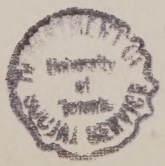

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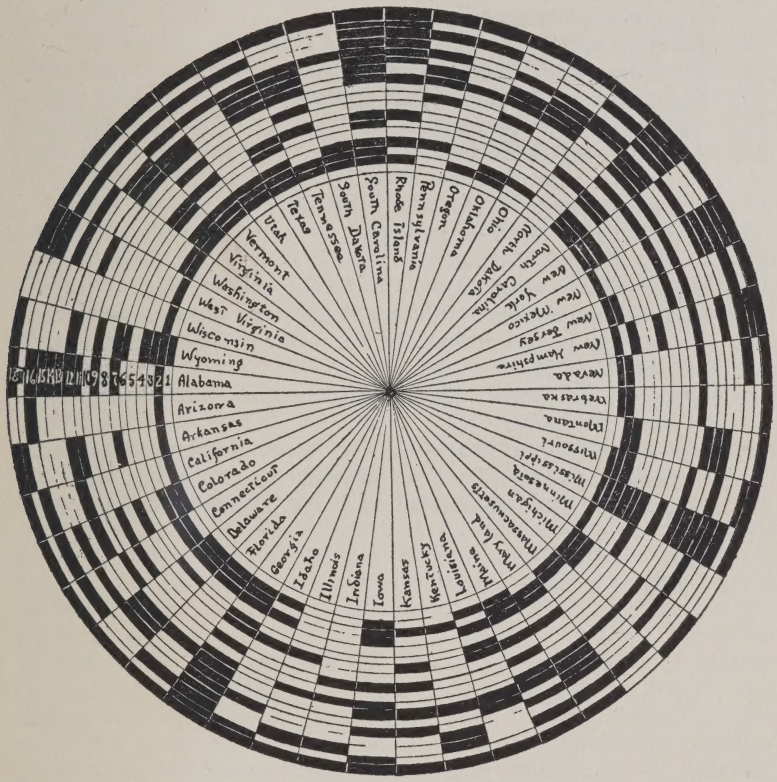
CHART I. STATE LAWS FOR PROTECTION OF CHILDREN.




## KEY TO CHART I[1]

1. Child labor law.
2. Child labor law prohibiting without exceptions employment in factories and stores under 14 and in mines and quarries under 16 years of age.
3. Prohibition of night work without exception under 16 years of age.
4. Limitation of daily hours of labor in any gainful occupation to 8 hours under 16 years of age.

[1] Chart I was prepared by Mrs. Bertha Hills Styles, to accompany her article, Part III, Public Intervention in Massachusetts for the Protection of Children in Need of Special Care.

5. Statewide compulsory education.
6. Statewide compulsory education until 16 years of age.
7. Compulsory continuation school.
8. Juvenile court.
9. Juvenile court for all under 17 years of age.
10. Right to remove child from parent.
11. Age of consent 18 years.
12. Adoption regulated by:
    (*a*) Petition through court.
    (*b*) Consent of parents.
    (*c*) Publication of petition.
    (*d*) Public hearing.
13. Equal guardianship rights for father and mother.
14. Disposition of minor children of divorced parents specifically stated to be determined by the welfare of the children.
15. Mother's aid law.
16. Mother's aid specifically stated to be given during imprisonment of father.
17. Non-support law providing for bond, suspended sentence, regular payments and supervision by court, etc.
18. Illegitimate child supported as if legitimate by father.

# INTRODUCTION

The studies contained in this volume are based upon information found in 2,190 routine case records obtained from thirteen social agencies that have their headquarters in Boston, mostly working with children. Of this number of case records 1,600 were furnished by the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

This enterprise, therefore, is an interesting undertaking in which information gathered by social workers in their daily tasks with families has been evaluated, and is here made to throw light upon such complicated social problems as the neglect of children and the discovery of better methods of community organization of remedy and prevention.

Whether the conclusions contained in these studies shall be able to stand the various other examinations to which they should be subjected, as well as the tests of time, much light is thrown on social questions with which the whole community must increasingly grapple, but about which few but social workers are at present much excited.

With Mothers' Aid statutes on the books of forty-two states of the United States, we may with fairness say that a remedy has been found for the care of the fatherless child that has a good mother left, but what about the motherless child? As a rule the widower with young children, after having recovered from the first shock of his bereavement, sets to work to be both mother and father to his flock. The fact that he is able to provide the means for their support gives him a false feeling of security, out of which he is often very rudely awakened when his children begin to show signs of neglect, of rude conduct, or of budding delinquency, whose further development he does not have the time or the knowledge to prevent. Even when there are older children, either fully eighteen or approaching it, to help with the care of the younger ones, the problem is not wholly solved, since they are not always capable and are seldom trained for the task, and even when they are good household managers they find it hard to train their younger brothers and sisters into community living.

We are all agreed that a family should not be sapped of its own self-help, but at the same time it is necessary for a social agency in order to do preventive work to come on the scene early. How the private and public children's and family welfare agencies can successfully play in with the family in preventing the

physical and moral shipwreck of its children, a problem that seems much more common in widowers' than in widows' families, is a question that we shall have with us for some time to come.

If once our communities could be permeated with the understanding that children's aid societies are not primarily for the children of the "down and out" or of "paupers," but for the purpose of rendering service to the self-respecting who often need professional advice and assistance in working out their own plans, and then if children's societies could help to develop flexible programs for keeping father and children together or at least in close touch with each other, some more of the tragedies could be prevented.

In most cities a surviving father who can pay board for his children is forced to make his own plans. But if child-placing is an art, as most children's workers believe and are generally ready to prove, the chances of his placing his children suitably are poor. Probably at least fifty per cent. of the placements made by the father are maladjustments. There is, therefore, unusual opportunity for further development to meet children's needs, even in Boston where child-placing has taken great strides. Of this need this study gives evidence.

When a family is unable or unwilling to train or care for its children, the school, the church, the social agencies, the municipality, or the state have had responsibilities added unto them. If these are not met in a suitable way there will be inevitable breakdown that will show itself sooner or later in juvenile delinquence, in physical or mental defect or degeneracy. To prevent such results the community's interest must concern itself more and more with the earlier years in order that the source of the trouble may be reached.

The study of the plight of children in prisoners' families and of those whose homes have been broken by divorce, separation or desertion gives evidence of the influences to which large numbers are exposed and they foreshadow results in their lives that bring misery to themselves and social problems to the community.

Up to the present time child neglect has been left almost entirely to private effort. These organizations have performed this function with devotion, but they rarely have been able to compass the whole task. Such states as Massachusetts, Minnesota, Ohio and New York have extensive programs in child care, but there are in all of them as yet many gaps. Many states have child hygiene programs in which every individual infant counts, and every birth is not only recorded immediately after it has

occurred but every home is visited. How soon will our communities realize that the runabout child and the child in the school and adolescent years is equally in need of systematic oversight, which is a task that is so extensive that it requires the interest of city and state in its corporate capacity?

C. C. CARSTENS, Director,
Child Welfare League of America.

New York, January 3, 1924.

Mother is the keystone of the family. When there is no support beyond father's earnings and father dies, some assistance must be provided, but there is still the mother's heart and mother's care to keep the flock together. When mother dies there is little remaining but desolation.

This brief study of 590 widowers' families reveals the hopelessness with which social agencies approach the motherless brood. Almost always they break up the family; and though they carry out placement effectively, there is comparatively little done to preserve the family ties and to keep father and children in close relationship.

But to say that the agencies fail in this particular is far from saying how they might succeed. Mother's loss cannot be replaced. If a housekeeper is installed a complication of difficulties suddenly arises. About 7 per cent. of the fathers studied tried this scheme and nearly everyone failed. Some tried to do mother's work as well as their own. This also failed. What to do with a widower's children is a case problem of first magnitude. This study renders a community service by pointing out the difficulties and calling attention to the need of study. Mother's aid is a child welfare process. What can we do for the widower's children?

Robert W. Kelso, Executive Secretary,
Boston Council of Social Agencies.

## DIRECTOR'S PREFACE

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the cordial support and increased interest of Boston social workers in our co-operative research series. Persons in charge of children's agencies gave much time and thought to making available, under restrictions safeguarding their confidential character, the case records on which the following studies have been based. Their assistance in the interpretation of findings is evident in the signed articles and in the summary of discussions at the general meeting of representatives of agencies contributing case records.

The three studies based on records of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children were made by fellows of the Research Department of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union, working under my supervision. The published reports are condensations of those presented in satisfaction of requirements for the M. S. degree at Simmons College. Students in the statistics class at the Simmons College School of Social Work assisted me in the analyses of the records of the thirteen agencies contributing to the more general study of widowers' children. My research assistant, Miss C. E. Heermann, has given much valuable assistance in the copying of manuscripts, preparation of statistical tables and graphs, and in caring for details of publication.

Lucile Eaves,

Director, Research Department, Women's Educational and Industrial Union.

Associate Professor of Economic Research, Simmons College.

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PART I

# WIDOWERS' CHILDREN

A STUDY OF CASE RECORDS FROM THIRTEEN SOCIAL AGENCIES

BY LUCILE EAVES, ASSISTED BY STUDENTS IN THE STATISICS CLASS OF SIMMONS COLLEGE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
1922-1923

# CHAPTER I

## WIDOWERS' CHILDREN

Widowers have been neglected by students of family relief, although the care of their children requires a large share of the funds and services of children's agencies. Satisfactory plans for dealing with the children of widows were developed after many years of cruel and wasteful bungling. Mothers' pension laws found on the statute books of 42 states express a general acceptance of the belief that mothers of fatherless children should be given financial assistance, advice and guidance while filling the double rôle of father and mother. The report of a recent investigation by the Children's Bureau of the care given over three thousand of these children, fathered by the public, may be read with a sense of satisfaction.[1] Modern social workers have achieved a solution of an age-old problem—the care of the fatherless! But similar study of assistance given widowers shows comparative failure in dealing with the motherless.

An appraisal of the conditions to be met must precede the making of plans better adapted to the peculiar needs of children who have suffered the loss of this most primitive and indispensable of social ties. Such an effort is made in this study to which many present and prospective social workers have contributed. Members of the statistics classes of the School of Social Work of Simmons College assisted in the analyses of 590 case records of care given widowers' families by thirteen Boston children's agencies.[2] (Table 1.) Data from these reports reveal the causes of death of the mothers, the conditions in the families when they turned to the social agencies for assistance, and the subsequent histories of the children while under the care of social workers.

[1] Nesbitt, Florence. Standards of Public Aid to Children in their Own Homes, U. S. Children's Bureau Publication No. 118.

[2] The records were analyzed in the order in which they were found in the files, or assigned by officials of the agencies. While a fair sample was obtained from each contributing agency, the records were not used exhaustively. There remained many widowers' families dealt with in recent years whose case records were not included in the study. Efforts were made to avoid duplication, but since a child sometimes was transferred from one agency to another which seemed to have facilities for treatment better adapted to his peculiar needs, and since a large group cooperated in the case analyses, it seems probable that in a few instances the same widower appeared in more than one case record. Such duplications, however, will not invalidate general conclusions based on the tabulated data. Investigators wishing copies of schedules used in the analyses of the case records may obtain them by addressing the Research Department, Women's Educational and Industrial Union, Boston.

TABLE 1. BOSTON SOCIAL AGENCIES WHOSE CASE RECORDS SUPPLIED DATA FOR THE STUDY OF WIDOWERS' CHILDREN

| Agency | Records | |
|---|---|---|
| | Number | Per cent. |
| Total | 590 | 100.00 |
| Children's Mission to Children | 118 | 20.00 |
| New England Home for Little Wanderers | 96 | 16.27 |
| Division of Child Guardianship, Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare | 85 | 14.41 |
| Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children[1] | 78 | 13.22 |
| Judge Baker Foundation | 42 | 7.12 |
| Church Home Society | 39 | 6.61 |
| Boston Children's Aid Society | 33 | 5.59 |
| Boston Society for the Care of Girls | 22 | 3.73 |
| Federated Jewish Charities | 22 | 3.73 |
| Family Welfare or Charity Organization Societies | 21 | 3.56 |
| Boston Children's Friend Society | 14 | 2.37 |
| Bethesda Society | 13 | 2.20 |
| Hospital Social Service Departments | 7 | 1.19 |

[1] See also the study by Anna Ely Morehouse (Part II, Chap. I), based on data obtained from analyses of 500 case records of earlier dates than these used in this chapter.

*Causes of the Mothers' Deaths*

More than two out of five of the mothers had died of the highly infectious diseases—influenza and tuberculosis. (Table 2.) Death overtook them when they were surrounded by young children dependent on their care. (Table 3-A, Chart II.) Seven out of every ten of those who died of tuberculosis, and eight out of every ten of those who died of influenza were between 25 and 40 years old when they were parted from their little flocks. (Table 4, Chart III.) Influenza left 361 and tuberculosis 330 motherless children under 18 years of age. Thus over a third of the children studied required special care because their mothers were cut down in the prime of life by these two diseases. (Table 3.) The need of efforts to inform these devoted household nurses about methods of avoiding infection or of preventing the development of latent tuberculosis is obvious.

TABLE 2. CAUSES OF DEATHS OF 493[1] MOTHERS OF WIDOWERS' CHILDREN. CASE RECORDS FROM THIRTEEN SOCIAL AGENCIES

| Cause of death | Mothers who died of diseases specified | |
|---|---|---|
| | Number | Per cent. |
| Total | 493 | 100.00 |
| Tuberculosis | 103 | 20.89 |
| Influenza | 106 | 21.50 |
| Childbirth, miscarriage | 62 | 12.58 |
| Pneumonia | 46 | 9.33 |
| Cancer | 38 | 7.71 |
| Kidney troubles | 21 | 4.26 |
| Heart diseases | 17 | 3.45 |
| Insanity, brain affections | 14 | 2.84 |
| Operations, surgical shock | 13 | 2.64 |
| Septicemia | 9 | 1.83 |
| Suicide | 6 | 1.22 |
| Goiter | 5 | 1.01 |
| Appendicitis | 4 | .81 |
| Gall-stones | 4 | .81 |
| Poison | 4 | .81 |
| Paralysis | 4 | .81 |
| Accidents | 3 | .61 |
| Asthma | 3 | .61 |
| Abscess | 3 | .61 |
| Typhoid | 2 | .41 |
| Gastritis | 2 | .41 |
| Peritonitis | 2 | .41 |
| Burns | 2 | .41 |
| Miscellaneous | 20 | 4.06 |

[1] The causes of death were not stated in 97 of the case records studied.

TABLE 3. CHILDREN LESS THAN EIGHTEEN YEARS OLD LEFT MOTHERLESS BY THE DEATHS OF THE WIDOWERS' WIVES. RECORDS TAKEN FROM THIRTEEN SOCIAL AGENCIES

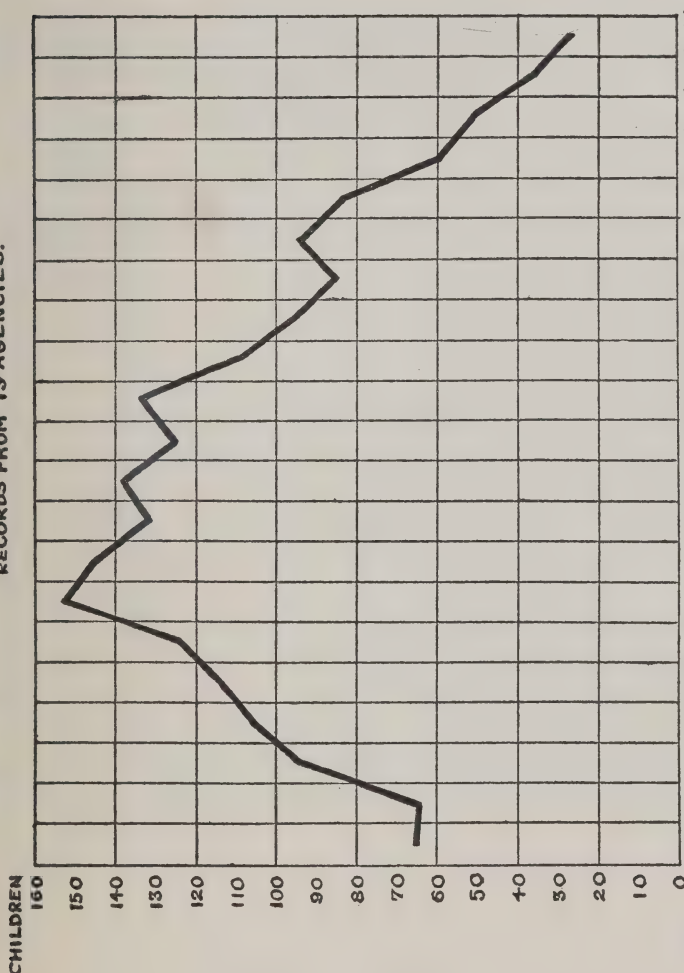
| Cause of death of mother | Children under 18 left motherless | | Widowers' families in which the mothers died of diseases specified, leaving children under eighteen years of age as stated below | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Per cent. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Total[1] | 1,932 | 100.00 | 88 | 246 | 396 | 276 | 440 | 270 | 140 | 48 | 18 | 10 |
| Tuberculosis | 330 | 17.08 | 13 | 38 | 93 | 60 | 90 | 36 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Influenza | 361 | 18.69 | 11 | 44 | 69 | 40 | 75 | 24 | 63 | 16 | 9 | 10 |
| Childbirth, miscarriage | 220 | 11.39 | 8 | 28 | 39 | 40 | 30 | 30 | 28 | 8 | 9 | .. |
| Pneumonia | 148 | 7.66 | 7 | 22 | 24 | 16 | 35 | 36 | .. | 8 | .. | .. |
| Cancer | 122 | 6.31 | 10 | 12 | 24 | 12 | 45 | 12 | 7 | .. | .. | .. |
| Kidney troubles | 67 | 3.47 | 4 | 8 | 18 | .. | 25 | 12 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Heart diseases | 39 | 2.02 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 4 | 5 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Insanity, brain affections | 36 | 1.86 | 5 | 10 | 3 | 4 | .. | 6 | .. | 8 | .. | .. |
| Operations, surgical shock | 43 | 2.23 | 4 | 2 | 12 | .. | 5 | 6 | 14 | .. | .. | .. |
| Septicemia | 37 | 1.92 | .. | 4 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 6 | .. | 8 | .. | .. |
| Suicide | 22 | 1.14 | .. | 4 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Miscellaneous | 195 | 10.09 | 9 | 24 | 45 | 28 | 25 | 36 | 28 | .. | .. | .. |
| Not stated | 312 | 16.15 | 12 | 40 | 45 | 60 | 95 | 60 | .. | .. | .. | .. |

[1] Data were incomplete or the children were older in 16 records.

Thorough instruction might prevent also many of the deaths from childbirth and pneumonia, although mortality from these diseases was less. One out of 8 of the mothers died in childbirth, and one in 10 of pneumonia. Cancer caused the deaths of 38, or about one in 13. This disease overtook half of its victims when they were over forty, so that their children were older and better able to dispense with motherly care.

The three groups of deaths coming next in frequency may yield less readily to preventive efforts. The kidney troubles developed among mothers of all ages, although more common between 30 and 40. This was true also of various brain affections or insanity, but diseases of the heart took their toll when the mothers were in the later thirties. The various other maladies caused deaths with frequencies less than half as great as that of the least of these 8 major causes of death. (Table 2.)

CHART II. AGE DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN IN THE WIDOWERS' FAMILIES.
RECORDS FROM 13 AGENCIES.




COMPLETE DATA IS IN TABLE 3-A. COMPARE WITH CHART IV.

TABLE 3-A. AGE DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN IN WIDOWERS' FAMILIES. RECORDS TAKEN FROM THIRTEEN SOCIAL AGENCIES

| Age | Children of ages specified | |
|---|---|---|
| | Number | Per cent. |
| Total[1] | 2,145 | 100.00 |
| Less than one year | 65 | 3.03 |
| One year and less than two | 64 | 2.98 |
| Two years and less than three | 94 | 4.38 |
| Three years and less than four | 107 | 4.99 |
| Four years and less than five | 114 | 5.31 |
| Five years and less than six | 124 | 5.78 |
| Six years and less than seven | 153 | 7.13 |
| Seven years and less than eight | 146 | 6.81 |
| Eight years and less than nine | 132 | 6.15 |
| Nine years and less than ten | 138 | 6.43 |
| Ten years and less than eleven | 126 | 5.87 |
| Eleven years and less than twelve | 134 | 6.25 |
| Twelve years and less than thirteen | 109 | 5.08 |
| Thirteen years and less than fourteen | 95 | 4.43 |
| Fourteen years and less than fifteen | 85 | 3.96 |
| Fifteen years and less than sixteen | 94 | 4.38 |
| Sixteen years and less than seventeen | 83 | 3.87 |
| Seventeen years and less than eighteen | 60 | 2.80 |
| Eighteen years and less than nineteen | 51 | 2.38 |
| Nineteen years and less than twenty | 36 | 1.68 |
| Twenty years and less than twenty-one | 27 | 1.26 |
| Twenty-one years and more | 108 | 5.04 |

[1] Ages were not stated for 81 children, and 45 had died before the record opened. It is possible that in some records older children not living with the widower were omitted. The ages stated were those given when the case opened.

CHART III. AGES OF MOTHERS AT DEATHS — FIVE PRINCIPAL CAUSES.

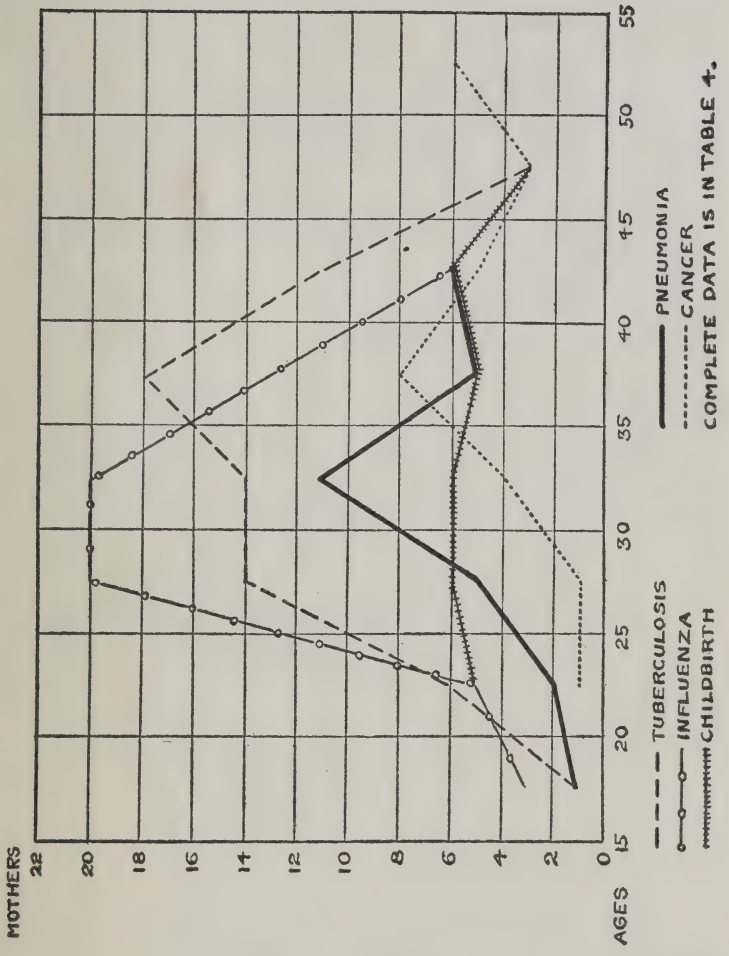


TABLE 4. AGE PERIODS WHEN THE MOTHERS OF THE WIDOWERS' CHILDREN DIED, BY CAUSES OF DEATH. RECORDS TAKEN FROM THIRTEEN SOCIAL AGENCIES

| Cause of death | Number of mothers who died of specified diseases in the stated age periods | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | 15-19 | 20-24 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35-39 | 40-44 | 45-49 | 50-54 |
| Total | 337[1] | 6 | 35 | 64 | 85 | 73 | 51 | 17 | 6 |
| Tuberculosis | 67 | 1 | 6 | 14 | 14 | 18 | 11 | 3 | .. |
| Influenza | 67 | 3 | 5 | 20 | 20 | 13 | 6 | .. | .. |
| Childbirth, miscarriage | 31 | .. | 5 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 3 | .. |
| Pneumonia | 30 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 11 | 5 | 6 | .. | .. |
| Cancer | 27 | .. | 1 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 5 |
| Kidney troubles | 17 | .. | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | .. |
| Heart diseases | 11 | .. | .. | 1 | 2 | 7 | 1 | .. | .. |
| Insanity, brain affections | 12 | .. | 2 | 1 | 5 | 1 | .. | 2 | 1 |
| Operations, surgical shock | 4 | .. | .. | .. | 1 | 1 | 2 | .. | .. |
| Septicemia | 4 | .. | .. | 1 | 2 | 1 | .. | .. | .. |
| Suicide | 5 | .. | 4 | .. | 1 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Goiter | 5 | .. | 1 | 4 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Appendicitis | 3 | .. | 1 | .. | 1 | .. | 1 | .. | .. |
| Gall-stones | 4 | .. | 1 | 1 | .. | 1 | .. | 1 | .. |
| Paralysis | 4 | .. | .. | 1 | .. | 2 | 1 | .. | .. |
| Miscellaneous | 14 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 3 | .. | .. |
| Not stated | 32 | .. | 3 | 4 | 10 | 4 | 8 | 3 | .. |

[1] Ages at death were not stated in 253 records.

A negligible proportion of these mothers could be classed with those physically and mentally unfit for the continuation of the race. The general utilization of preventive medical knowledge at our command might have saved or prolonged the lives of one-half to three-fourths of these women who were soon proved to be indispensable to the maintenance of normal family life for their husbands and children. As we consider the complex and difficult problems created by their loss, we may well remind ourselves of Homer Folks' declaration that *prevention* is "relatively certain, complete, permanent, cheap and quick."

*Family Conditions When the Mothers Died*

The disintegration of the widowers' families commenced during the last illnesses of their wives, as it was inevitable that, with but few exceptions, there was a loss of such orderly family life and regular habits as may have been in force while the mothers were in charge. The children often were scattered in the homes of relatives or friends, or were neglected while all the family resources were devoted to the care of their mothers.

About one in ten (11 per cent.) of the families were in touch with social agencies because they had required help before the mothers' deaths. This group was composed largely of those whose resources had been depleted by the prolonged financial demands made by such diseases as cancer and tuberculosis.

The funeral often was followed by months of drifting from bad to worse. Many of the fathers failed to realize how indispensable had been the services rendered by the mothers; and their preoccupation with personal sorrow prevented the focussing of attention on the needs of the children. Such descriptive phrases as "dazed," "completely overcome by his loss," occur frequently in the case records. Their reluctance to seek help in the care of their children is suggested by the fact that over half managed to struggle through the first year without assistance. No doubt many failed to realize that their children were being injured seriously by the lack of care and supervision. (Table 5.)

Here we meet with our first failure in the care of widowers' children. No argument is needed to prove that a poor wage-earner whose family is dependent on his daily earnings, and whose savings have been depleted by the last illness and funeral of his wife, rarely is capable of finding the means for giving proper care to a family of young children. Fathers as well as mothers are entitled to recognition and assistance in the honorable task of rearing the next generation! A preventive program would require the prompt discovery of all of these families whose circumstances make disaster almost inevitable. The case records gave abundant testimony of the physical and moral neglect suffered during the interval between the mothers' deaths and the discovery of need of assistance in the care of the widowers' children. They show also the agencies which might be organized for a more fully preventive program.

*Means of Discovering the Needs of Widowers' Children*

The alert and well-trained workers in Boston's numerous social agencies were most concerned about the necessity of providing adequate care for these motherless children. They obtained assistance for about two out of five of the families. We would expect the various children's agencies to discover the needs for their services, but the important rôle of medical social service in enlisting prompt attention to the needs of neglected children had not been so fully appreciated. Help was brought to one in eight of the families through efforts of the social workers in hospitals, clinics and dispensaries, or of visiting nurses. While co-operating

TABLE 5. TIME BETWEEN THE DEATH OF THE MOTHER AND APPLICATION FOR ASSISTANCE TO THE WIDOWER. RECORDS TAKEN FROM THIRTEEN SOCIAL AGENCIES

| Time | Widowers' families | |
|---|---|---|
| | Number | Per cent. |
| Total families | 545[1] | 100.00 |
| Under care before the death of the mother | 60 | 11.00 |
| Application made in less than one month | 58 | 10.66 |
| One month and less than six months | 94 | 17.25 |
| Six months and less than one year | 47 | 8.62 |
| One year and less than two years | 54 | 9.91 |
| Two years and less than three years | 65 | 11.93 |
| Three years and less than four years | 52 | 9.54 |
| Four years and less than five years | 33 | 6.06 |
| Five years and less than six years | 20 | 3.67 |
| Six years and less than seven years | 12 | 2.20 |
| Seven years and less than eight years | 8 | 1.47 |
| Eight years and less than nine years | 5 | 0.92 |
| Nine years and less than ten years | 7 | 1.28 |
| Ten years and more | 30 | 5.50 |

[1] Data for this table were incomplete in 45 records.

with physicians caring for the mothers during their last illnesses, they learned of family needs and reported to children's agencies cases where the father seemed unable to provide suitable care. Relatives made the applications for assistance in one-fourth of the cases receiving care. Fathers usually sought help, though in some families aunts or grandparents felt the greater sense of responsibility for the welfare of the motherless children. (Table 6.)

Private rather than public agencies assumed the chief responsibility for finding the assistance needed by the widowers' families. The records indicate that only 13 of the 590 families were brought to the attention of child-caring agencies by public school officials, yet the schools are in continuous contact with the children, and their representatives might well be the first to discover any serious lack of care and supervision.[1] With a complete development of the spirit of social service, supervisors, teachers and school nurses will become expert in recognizing situations where there is probability that children may be in need of special protection, and will develop means for their care, or will feel responsible for enlisting private agencies capable of rendering the needed services.

In communities less generously supplied with social agencies

[1] The public school authorities play a more important role in cases of children who required the intervention of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Part II, Chapter IV, Table 8.

TABLE 6. PERSONS WHO REQUESTED THE CHILDREN'S AGENCIES TO GIVE ASSISTANCE TO THE WIDOWERS' CHILDREN. RECORDS TAKEN FROM THIRTEEN SOCIAL AGENCIES

| Persons | Widowers' families whose needs were made known by the persons specified | |
|---|---|---|
| | Number | Per cent. |
| Total | 590 | 100.00 |
| Relatives | 147 | 24.92 |
| Fathers | 106 | 17.97 |
| Grandparents | 12 | 2.03 |
| Aunts | 16 | 2.71 |
| Other Relatives | 13 | 2.20 |
| Social workers from | 229 | 38.81 |
| Children's Agencies | 90 | 15.25 |
| Family Welfare Societies, or associated charities and other relief agencies | 46 | 7.80 |
| Social Service departments of hospitals, clinics, and dispensaries | 65 | 11.02 |
| Nurses' Organizations | 13 | 2.20 |
| Other agencies | 15 | 2.54 |
| Public Officials | 81 | 13.73 |
| Overseers of the Poor | 9 | 1.53 |
| State Department of Public Welfare, Bureau of Child Guardianship | 4 | .68 |
| Probation Officers | 5 | .85 |
| Policemen | 10 | 1.69 |
| Teachers and School Nurses | 13 | 2.20 |
| Juvenile Court | 27 | 4.58 |
| Others | 13 | 2.20 |
| Physicians | 9 | 1.53 |
| Employers | 6 | 1.02 |
| Friends and Neighbors | 52 | 8.81 |
| Church Workers, Priests, Pastors | 37 | 6.27 |
| Missions | 11 | 1.86 |
| Miscellaneous | 7 | 1.19 |
| No data | 11 | 1.86 |

than Boston, there will be need of greater alertness in the less important groups shown in our tabulation. The surprisingly small number of cases where the needs of the children were discovered by church workers may be due to their confidence in the ability of alert agents of children's societies to give all needed protection. Friends and neighbors, physicians and even employers should feel responsible for the enlistment of needed assistance whenever the circumstances are such that there are strong prob-

abilities that children may suffer from neglect. A complete preventive program for the care of children cannot be assured until we reach a stage of development where there is a general consciousness of this community over-parenthood.

*Conditions Found in the Widowers' Families*

What were the conditions which confronted the expert social workers who undertook the difficult task of advising the widowers about ways of solving the complex family problems which arise when the home mother is gone? The families averaged over three children who were under eighteen years of age, in two out of five there were more than three, and over a fourth of the widowers had five or more children who were still in need of motherly care. The fathers were not handicapped by lack of familiarity with American conditions, as over a third were born in the United States, and many came from Canada or other British countries; so that nearly two-thirds of the families had standards and backgrounds which may have made it less difficult for the social workers to care for their children. (Table 7.)

The character of the father is the first consideration of the social worker who tries to make plans for the broken family. When he has the devotion which prompts hard work and self-sacrifice, when he is ready to co-operate intelligently in plans which promise the best possible care for his children, then it is not impossible to meet even such difficult situations as were found in families where there were five to seven young children. But a careful examination of the case records shows that nearly half of the fathers were quite unfit for their parental duties. A rough classification based on descriptive phrases used in the case records gives the following results:

*Personal Characteristics of the Widowers.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Total number described | 547 |
| Good | 162 |
| Fair | 128 |
| Unsatisfactory | 165 |
| Bad | 92 |

Typical examples from each of these groups will illustrate the complex family situations met by those who try to solve the problems of caring for widowers' children:

Mike O'Grady, a warm-hearted Irishman who loved devotedly his six children, the oldest of whom was a boy of 13, found it hard but not impossible, to care for his little brood with his earnings of less than twenty dollars per week.

TABLE 7. BIRTHPLACES OF WIDOWERS

| Birthplace | Widowers of birthplace specified | |
|---|---|---|
| | Number | Per cent. |
| Total | 507[1] | 100.00 |
| *United States* | 198 | 39.05 |
| *British Possessions* | 120 | 23.67 |
| Canada | 53 | 10.45 |
| Ireland | 33 | 6.51 |
| England, Scotland, Wales | 27 | 5.33 |
| West Indies | 6 | 1.18 |
| Australia | 1 | .20 |
| *European Countries* | 173 | 34.12 |
| Italy | 66 | 13.02 |
| Russia | 42 | 8.28 |
| Greece | 13 | 2.56 |
| Other | 52 | 10.26 |
| *Asiatic Countries* | 16 | 3.16 |

[1] Birthplaces were not reported for 83 fathers.

Ulysses, a peddler, was determined to keep together his family of seven, who ranged in age from the girl of 10 to a baby boy less than one year old. He is described as "an unusually intelligent type." Temporary assistance only was necessary until he could carry out his plan of bringing his sister from Greece, thus re-establishing his home.

Patrick O'Connor was another father who was determined to hold on to his family of six children. The oldest boy of 14 contributed his earnings to the family budget, and the girl of 11 helped her father do the housework. Temporary assistance was given to one child suffering from a fractured leg, but the devoted father retained the custody of his children. He is described as vigorous and honest in appearance, a fatherly, intelligent man.

This group of good fathers are spoken of as "affectionate," "devoted," and the phrases "anxious to do the best he can for his children," or "determined to keep his family together," occur frequently.

The fathers classified as "fair," were affectionate, but were as a rule less intelligent and capable, and there were many for whom defects of character were reported. For example, one was described as "a big, easy-going man, intelligent and quick-witted, fond of his children, but considers them as playthings rather than as responsibilities." With this attitude it is not sur-

prising to find his 15-year-old boy a ward of the Juvenile Court. Then there was the "gentle-looking, friendly little man who could not control his children," and the father who was "ignorant and stubborn," but had good habits and was conscientious. Numerous fathers could be commended when they were not drinking too much, and there were various types of negative personalities who seemed willing to meet their family obligations but whose characters received little comment because of the absence of well-defined traits. However, it was evident that the fathers in the "fair" group were assets in the lives of their children, even though many failed to meet their paternal obligations without some pressure or much coaching from the social workers who were endeavoring to care for their children.

Inability to control their desire for alcoholic drinks was the chief curse of the families where the fathers were reported as unsatisfactory or bad. This was true of 56 or 3 in 10 of the 165 "unsatisfactory" fathers and of 41 or nearly half of the 92 bad fathers. There were redeeming qualities which made it possible for the social workers to co-operate with some of the intemperate fathers, who have been classified as "unsatisfactory." One is described when sober as a "good sort, trustworthy, having good judgment, wishing to re-establish his family," but, unfortunately for his five children, he was "under the influence of liquor most of the time." Several were reported to be "kind when sober but very abusive when drunk," and two were "good, steady, workmen" though too much under the influence of liquor. However, the number (6) of drunkards with these better qualities was quite small.

Such descriptions as "alcoholic, rough, hard type, abusive, neglectful, much of a bully"; "drinks, unsteady worker, worthless"; "until recently a drug addict, drunkard, served 10 years in prison, insolent, proud, ran through an inheritance, most unstable"; "neat, thin, pale, alcoholic, distrustful of everyone"; "drinks and has a violent temper"; "excessively alcoholic, selfish, indifferent to his children"; "a 'dandy,' very careless, unsatisfactory worker, not reliable, has been a heavy drinker"—suggest the extreme difficulties which confront a social worker charged with the duty of devising plans for the care of a drunkard's children.

About half of the unsatisfactory fathers were described as "shiftless and lazy," "lacking in a sense of responsibility," "anxious to shirk responsibility of caring for his children, desirous of getting all he can and of giving as little as possible." This is the typical, weak-fibered, pauper type with which all relief workers

are familiar. This lack of sense of parental responsibility culminated in the nine families of this group where the children were deserted by their fathers. Five of the eleven fathers charged with sexual immorality were said to have made improper advances to the women of their households. Mental defects reported for seven unsatisfactory fathers varied from great eccentricity or nervous disorders to feeble-mindedness.

The weak or vicious traits of the unsatisfactory fathers appeared with greater frequency and intensity in the group of 92 bad fathers. Drunkenness, sexual immorality, degeneracy, brutality and shiftlessness were so common that it seems probable that the 21 deserted families were better off without their presence. Over one-fifth of the cases in this group were histories of the vigorous interventions for the protection of children made by agents of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. The following extracts from the case records will show the degrading associations from which the childrens' agencies rescued these unfortunate children left by their mothers' deaths in the custody of bad fathers:

"High-strung, excitable, coarse, brutal, parsimonious and utterly selfish," summarized the complexly disagreeable character of the father of two little girls.

A policeman called attention to the need of intervention for the protection of three dirty, unkempt children who slept with their father in a room where he caroused with drunken companions.

Three small girls probably suffered no serious loss when they were deserted by a "lazy, shiftless, dishonest, irresponsible" father who was too fond of drink.

A court action was necessary to force contributions for the support of three little boys from their father who drank heavily and was given to lies and immorality.

A father in jail for the rape of two girls is described as "about the vilest man we have ever met as he made a business of ruining young girls 10 to 14 years of age."

Four children ranging in age from 2 to 7 and described as "stupid, under-nourished and neglected" were in charge of an illiterate, lazy father of low mentality and brutal habits.

The father of six children, the oldest of whom found refuge in a convent, is described as having some affection for his children when sober but showing terrible brutality when drunk. Then he would beat his wife and children and drag them about on the floor. Such mistreatment of his wife, when she was ad-

vanced in pregnancy, resulted in the death of the baby. Her cause of death was given as "abortion."

Six fathers were unfit custodians of their children because of varying degrees of insanity or feeble-mindedness.

The wickedness and degeneracy of these unworthy parents may be said to have culminated in the 5 fathers who committed incest with their daughters.

*Economic Status of the Families*

As already pointed out, a little over 10 per cent. of the widowers' families studied were receiving assistance before the deaths of the mothers and many of these required help because of the heavy expenses of the mothers' prolonged illnesses. It seems probable that not over 5 per cent. of the families would have found it necessary to seek or accept outside help if the mothers had been present and in normal health. The earnings of the fathers would class them with the lower two-thirds of the gainfully employed persons of the United States, and the proportion (42 per cent.) in the small income groups—below one thousand annually—was more than twice that (18 per cent.) in the entire population. (Table 8.) It is evident that the majority of the widowers belonged to the class of hard working, but less competent, wage-earners whose families hover near the poverty line and require assistance when emergencies arise. The difficulties of maintaining family life under such circumstances often weaken the mothers so that they succumb more readily to diseases or the strains of continuous child-bearing.

However, it is well known that the low-income portions of the population contribute more than their share of the next generation. The services of the self-sacrificing and hard-working mothers of the poorer families of the community are realized more fully when a study of widowers' experiences reveals how impossible it is to maintain the family life without their assistance.

An examination of the occupations reported by the widowers raises questions about the accuracy of the income reports. (Table 9.) Comparatively few were in occupations requiring no skill; then why should their earnings be so low as they reported? Nearly half (45 per cent.) were mechanics or operatives in fairly well-paid industries. Many of those engaged as teamsters, chauffeurs and street-railway employees, and also the janitors, barbers, cooks, salespeople, and even the peddlers, should have had much better weekly incomes than those reported to agents of the child-caring societies. It seems probable that either the deaths of the

wives and breaking up of the families removed incentives for vigorous and steady work, or that the widowers failed to report correctly their earnings because of unwillingness to make large contributions for the support of their children. However, the difficulties which confront social workers who make plans for widowers' families are revealed by these descriptions of the characters of the fathers and of their evident economic incapacity.

TABLE 8. APPROXIMATE WEEKLY EARNINGS OF WIDOWERS REQUIRING ASSISTANCE IN THE CARE OF THEIR CHILDREN. RECORDS TAKEN FROM THIRTEEN SOCIAL AGENCIES

| Weekly earnings | Widowers reporting specified weekly earnings | |
|---|---|---|
| | Number | Per cent. |
| Total | 390[1] | 100.00 |
| Unemployed | 15 | 3.85 |
| Less than $10 | 9 | 2.31 |
| $10-$14 | 46 | 11.79 |
| $15-$19 | 86 | 22.05 |
| $20-$24 | 86 | 22.05 |
| $25-$29 | 58 | 14.87 |
| $30-$34 | 36 | 9.23 |
| $35 and more | 45 | 11.54 |
| Irregular | 9 | 2.31 |

[1] No data about earnings were given in 200 of the case records studied.

Summarizing, we find that nearly half of the fathers were deficient in self-control or industry, and appeared to be quite devoid of the unselfish devotion necessary for the rearing of children. A high proportion were so degraded that they were unfit companions for their children, or were even in need of the discipline of correctional institutions. The earnings reported by nearly nine out of ten of the widowers were scarcely sufficient for their own support and could not have maintained in health and decency an adult man and three children, which was the average family group reported in the 590 case histories. It is evident that continuous training and disciplining of the fathers and substantial contributions were inseparable from the care of this group of widowers' families.

TABLE 9. OCCUPATIONS OF WIDOWERS

| Occupation | Widowers | |
|---|---|---|
| | Number | Per cent. |
| Total | 590 | 100.00 |
| *Manufacturing and Mechanical Industries* | 264 | 44.75 |
| Machinists, tool makers and other metal workers | 54 | 9.15 |
| Carpenters, cabinet makers, other wood workers | 52 | 8.81 |
| Shoe workers | 25 | 4.24 |
| Tailors, clothing makers | 21 | 3.56 |
| Painters, plasterers, paperhangers | 18 | 3.05 |
| Textile workers | 11 | 1.86 |
| Bakers, makers of food and beverages | 10 | 1.69 |
| Engineers, mechanical and stationary | 9 | 1.53 |
| Bricklayers, stonemasons | 8 | 1.36 |
| Printers | 8 | 1.36 |
| Electricians | 5 | .85 |
| Foremen and superintendents | 5 | .85 |
| Other factory operatives | 38 | 6.44 |
| *Transportation* | 83 | 14.07 |
| Teamsters, expressmen, hack drivers | 24 | 4.07 |
| Chauffeurs, garage men | 19 | 3.22 |
| Station and yard employees | 19 | 3.22 |
| Street railway employees | 13 | 2.20 |
| Dock workers | 5 | .85 |
| Miscellaneous | 3 | .51 |
| *Public Service* | 20 | 3.39 |
| Army and Navy | 13 | 2.20 |
| Miscellaneous | 7 | 1.19 |
| *Domestic and Personal Service* | 49 | 8.31 |
| Janitors | 14 | 2.37 |
| Cooks and waiters | 13 | 2.20 |
| Barbers | 8 | 1.36 |
| Miscellaneous | 14 | 2.37 |
| *Trade* | 47 | 7.97 |
| Salesmen | 12 | 2.03 |
| Storekeepers | 8 | 1.36 |
| Peddlers, hucksters | 8 | 1.36 |
| Marketmen | 6 | 1.02 |
| Miscellaneous trade positions | 13 | 2.20 |
| *Agriculture, Forestry, Animal Husbandry* | 22 | 3.73 |
| Farmers, farm-hands, gardeners | 13 | 2.20 |
| Woodsmen, lumbermen, loggers | 5 | .85 |
| Fishermen | 4 | .68 |
| *Clerical Workers* | 10 | 1.69 |
| *Professional Service* | 6 | 1.02 |
| *Miscellaneous*—Laborers | 58 | 9.83 |
| *No data* | 31 | 5.25 |

Twenty-eight widowers had a record of two or more occupations.

*Situations Found Within the Families*

An examination of the composition of the families whose case histories have been studied, makes it evident that widowers who could find any of the simpler, more obvious ways of readjustment to their serious loss rarely turned to the social agencies. When there were grown daughters who could take the places left vacant by the deaths of their mothers, or when there were aunts or grandmothers who could be enlisted, then the widowers were able to care for their children without outside help. The more difficult situations were submitted to the agents of the children's societies, who were called upon to find means of caring for families with but limited financial and personal resources, whose fathers frequently were ill-adapted to the responsibilities which they had assumed.

The average number of children was but little higher than that of the general population, but there were 231 families, or nearly half, in which there were four or more children less than 18 years old. (Table 10.) Sons or daughters above this age are assets rather than liabilities as they could contribute to the family budgets or assist in the housework and care of younger brothers and sisters. While 10 per cent. of the sons and daughters listed were 18 years old or over, the majority of these were married and burdened with growing families, or were living away from home when their fathers were in need of help in the care of younger brothers and sisters. It is safe to assume that the children less than 18 years old still were in need of assistance. Their distribution is shown in the accompanying table.

TABLE 10. CHILDREN LESS THAN 18 YEARS OLD FOUND IN WIDOWERS' FAMILIES

| Number of children | Families having specified number of children | |
|---|---|---|
| | Number | Per cent. |
| Total families reported | 574 | 100.00 |
| 1 child | 88 | 15.33 |
| 2 children | 123 | 21.43 |
| 3 children | 132 | 23.00 |
| 4 children | 69 | 12.02 |
| 5 children | 88 | 15.33 |
| 6 children | 45 | 7.84 |
| 7 children | 20 | 3.48 |
| 8 children and more | 9 | 1.57 |

*Relation of Older Children to Widowers' Families*

Twenty of the 162 good fathers had children who were 18 years old or over, but of this number only four had older daughters remaining at home, and two of these were mentally or morally defective. The other two did not fill the position of house mother in a satisfactory manner because in both families younger sisters went astray. Twelve of these superior widowers had older sons, but only five could receive assistance from them in caring for younger brothers and sisters. The older sons of the other seven families had enlisted in the army and navy, had sought work in other cities or had married and were burdened with the care of growing families.

A somewhat larger proportion of the 128 fathers classified as "fair" were able to retain the assistance of older sons and daughters, who were found in nineteen families. Ten older daughters, of whom half were employed outside the home, were living with their fathers and 11 had left their childhood homes. Seven sons, of whom one was married, lived with their fathers, and 13 had left home.

The families of the unsatisfactory and bad fathers had a much higher proportion of older children. It does not follow that this is characteristic of such families, but rather that widowers' families cared for by social agencies are a selected group of families suffering from the loss of the mothers. In the families of the better type where there is normal affection between the members and readiness to cooperate in the solution of family problems, younger children are cared for by their fathers and older brothers and sisters, and assistance is sought chiefly by widowers who have no older members of the family capable of giving the needed help.

The families with drunken, brutal or shiftless fathers were lacking in family pride and affection and incapable of united efforts to meet the crises resulting from the mothers' deaths. Older sons and daughters showed an eagerness to escape from the unhappy associations of their degraded homes. They worked or boarded away from their fathers or married at the earliest possible opportunity. The records indicate that in the 258 homes with unsatisfactory and bad fathers, there were only six daughters 18 years old or over who attempted to live with their fathers and take the places left vacant by the deaths of their mothers. Seven more older daughters presided over homes from which the fathers were absent; the father of three of these spent most of his time at sea, another father was in jail and three others had

deserted. One older daughter was feeble-minded, two were victims of unfortunate sex experiences and another is described as "run-away and stubborn." It is evident then that only a negligible proportion of the homes with unworthy fathers could be cared for by older daughters.

*Experiences with Hired Housekeepers*

"The father is determined to keep his family together," is the phrase used most frequently in describing the family feeling of the superior type of fathers. However, a study of these case histories proves that a widower of limited income finds it impossible to hire a housekeeper to take the place of the deceased wife and mother. Twenty-six of the 290 good or fair fathers attempted the employment of housekeepers to assist them in the care of their children. The following reports of their experiences are typical of the difficulties met with by those seeking this means of maintaining family life.

"Father had three or four housekeepers in two months—none was satisfactory."

"The housekeeper who had worked for the father made false charges of immoral relations between the father and daughter."

A household having a stingy father and three children had tried several housekeepers, none of whom would stay.

Workers from the children's agency found a good housekeeper. She did well by the family, but left on hearing about the father's immoral relations with a former housekeeper.

A widower with a housekeeper whose child lived in the family received reports from the neighbors declaring that the woman showed great partiality for her own son, but neglected grossly the children of the widower.

One housekeeper was alcoholic and another died in jail; six were reported merely as "unsatisfactory."

Two widowers discharged their housekeepers because they could not meet the heavy expenses of their wasteful management of the households.

One fortunate widower with four children was able to retain the same housekeeper for six years.

One father tried to keep house for his three children, but "lost his grip." He made an unsuccessful effort to find a housekeeper.

It was found impossible to procure a housekeeper for a family of six children, but the two 15 and 16 year-old girls were trained to serve as housekeepers.

Widowers with married female relatives living in the neigh-

borhood were able to make more satisfactory adjustments, as these women could render part-time services without being subject to gossip.

Experiences with housekeepers of the unsatisfactory and bad fathers were much like those of the widowers of finer character. A smaller proportion (about 6 per cent. compared with 9 per cent. of better type) attempted to maintain their family life in this way. The following are typical experiences:

The housekeepers left because the children were unruly. During the intervals when there was no help, the fourteen-year-old daughter lost her schooling while caring for the household.

The father employed several housekeepers, but none would stay because there were no conveniences.

Three housekeepers who were poor and wasteful discouraged another father who tried to keep his family together.

Two housekeepers had left one home because the father attempted unwelcome familiarities.

Another father had various housekeepers, but finally gave up the home and took rooms for himself and daughter in a lodging house.

The records indicate that satisfactory adjustments with housekeepers were made in five of the 258 families with unsatisfactory or bad fathers. One reported merely that the father had a good housekeeper; another had a woman coming in to work by the day; a third widower was broken of his bad habits and supplied with a housekeeper by church workers; a fourth housekeeper was a widow with two children who joined the widower's household which was subsidized by a small weekly allowance; in the fifth the widower and his two children were cared for by a housekeeper having an eleven-year-old boy, and the harmonious relations culminated in marriage.

The fact that only about seven in every hundred of the widowers even attempted the maintenance of the household by hired help shows their general realization that such plans were impracticable. Good and competent women easily could find employment in homes where the work would be lighter, compensation higher and more secure, and the surroundings more attractive. Rigid economy in housekeeping expenditures usually was necessary in order to keep the household budget within the modest income available for the family support. It was impossible to hire the unselfish devotion which is commonly required from wives and mothers in the homes of the poor.

The crowded quarters, poor neighborhoods, and the disorderly or even filthy conditions found in the homes swarming with

children and cared for by busy fathers and school girls frequently combined to make situations which would discourage any woman with decent standards. The inability of the majority of the fathers to maintain environments suitable for growing children is shown in the descriptions of such homes as survived the last illnesses and deaths of the mothers. Clean, orderly or even attractive homes were provided by about four out of seven of the good fathers, but the other three were unequal to the task. In the group of fair, unsatisfactory and bad fathers, the ratio of good homes was smaller, as about half of those classified as fair, one-third of the unsatisfactory and less than one-half of the bad fathers were able to maintain homes which were clean and sanitary, although frequently somewhat disorderly or "cluttered up." A few extracts from descriptions of visitors will show the varied surroundings in which they found the widower family groups. The following are typical of the better homes:

"Rather untidy, but the oldest daughter tries to keep the home and children clean."

"Shabby, but very clean and neat."

"A cheery home, the kitchen is a large, sunny room, excellently furnished and spotless."

"The rooms were cluttered up, but not unclean."

"The house was remarkably clean considering that no woman is in the home."

A father of five young children managed to maintain a neat, clean home with the assistance of the oldest, a ten-year-old daughter. He prepared the breakfasts and dinners and told the children what to have for lunch. A church visitor gave the family friendly oversight, and advised with the little housekeeper. The last reports said that the children "all did well" in the father's care.

Mothers often learn to discharge the duties of both parents. They go forth into the business or industrial world to earn a living and attend to their normal household tasks in the early morning, during the evening when they should be resting after the day's work, and on Saturday afternoon and Sunday. But fathers willing or capable of such varied labors and sacrifices are rare, or at least they were seldom found among these widowers described in the case records studied. The majority of those who wished to retain and care for their children were like the father who is described as "devoted to his children but unwilling to give them his personal care." Fathers of the classes to which the widowers belonged are influenced frequently by the customs and conventions of their associates. While the women of their house-

holds may have served as wage-earners before marriage, the men have done no housework and frequently cherish a primitive feeling that masculine dignity is sacrificed when feminine tasks are undertaken. A few fathers whose intelligence and devotion overcame these prejudices were able to train their children to give assistance with the housework. The enlistment of a friendly visitor or of neighborly oversight during the day rounds out such plans so that a fairly safe and wholesome family life may be maintained.

Descriptions of conditions found in the bad or less satisfactory homes justified in many cases the prompt removal of the children. Not only was their health imperiled by the failure to provide proper nourishment and sanitary surroundings, but also, in many cases, the environments and associates were such that revolting and degrading scenes were being stored in the children's minds. The following extracts from the reports of visitors of the children's agencies indicate the need of better social organization for the purpose of protecting children even from temporary exposure to such contaminating environments:

"Immoral women and men were frequenting the home."

"The father, child, housekeeper and her son occupied one room, which was uncared for and dirty."

"The rooms were poorly furnished, disorderly and very dirty."

"Deplorable conditions." The man was keeping house until his mother arrived from Russia.

"In fearful condition, bad odors, and articles of clothing on every chair and floor."

"The boy and girl were sleeping in the same bed with their father."

"Three filthy rooms, foul smelling, swarming with flies; bread, garlic and onions strewn on the floor."

*Methods of Caring for the Widowers' Children*

There were nearly two thousand (1,932) children under 18 years of age in the 590 widowers' families studied. (Table 3.) The records of supervision and of placements in families are too complicated to lend themselves readily to statistical tabulation. Many of them testify to the long-suffering patience with which the social workers sought to discover means of protecting and rearing motherless children. The lack of any generally accepted policy in dealing with the widowers' families was evident in the vacillation which was common to the treatment given in all the

agencies studied. A more or less lengthy period of experimental housekeeping was required to convince many fathers that homes have but little capacity for automatic adjustments, or that they could not combine their own services and those of the departed mother. The willingness or ability of relatives to care for the children also was subject to many fluctuations. There were but few families in which the plans for the care of the children were not subject to changes and five to eight placements were not uncommon in the more difficult cases.

Such changes in plans or replacements in some instances may have been necessary because the welfare of the growing child made desirable different environments, yet they must have prevented the development of stronger, more permanent social ties. There is value for character formation in learning to make adjustments to an accepted family group, even though its members have obvious human frailties. A child refuses to accept discipline in a good spirit when there is a consciousness that it is possible to obtain a transfer from the social group whose requirements may have become irksome. Thus children who had been placed in foster homes after periods of wretched living with incompetent fathers sometimes caused anxiety by their desire to return to the undisciplined neglect of their former homes.

This lingering belief in the possibility of a return to the natural family group was not unfounded, for there were over three hundred reports of more or less lengthy efforts of the fathers and children to keep house together. The natural affection of the fathers and the tendency of case workers to observe the axiomatic principle which demands the preservation of the family, kept such experiments going as long as there were any hopes of their success. A few exceptional fathers developed skill and intelligent interest in their domestic activities. For example, one absorbed eagerly the instruction in dietetics and became expert in providing his children with nourishing food at minimum cost.

However successful, these fatherly services were limited by the lack of time of the breadwinners of the families. One widower devoted his Saturday afternoons and Sundays to a general family clean-up. His children started the week in whole garments and shining with cleanliness, but usually were dirty and somewhat tattered before their father found time for the next weekly renovation. Widowers with intelligent and willing daughters who could be depended on to carry out plans made for brothers and sisters and to develop premature, housewifely skill under systematic instruction were most successful in maintaining

family life, but boys learned to cook and "mind the baby" in five families where there were no older girls.

These efforts of the fathers to keep house with the help of their children rarely were successful and frequently were abandoned in favor of foster homes. The premature assumption of adult cares is not often possible without loss to the physical and spiritual development of the children, even when they seem to be able to meet the heavy family responsibilities thrust upon them. Younger brothers and sisters do not accept readily the guidance of older, and efforts to assert their authority may have unfortunate effects on the characters of the sisters or brothers who have assumed adult cares. Thus the foster mother of one group of children refused to keep the oldest girl, because she insisted on "bossing" her younger brothers and sisters and there was continuous conflict of authority. It is difficult to undo the forcing process through which such children have passed and to return them to the care-free acceptance of adult guidance which is better adapted to their immature natures. An experienced social worker in intimate contact with a widower who had shown exceptional skill in maintaining family life with the help of his children remarked: "After careful consideration I am forced to the conclusion that the results are unsatisfactory."

Better adjustments were made by widowers who lived near relatives or friends who were willing to assist in the care of the children. An older married daughter living in an apartment near her father's, close neighbors or relatives who supplied one or more daily meals and after-school supervision, or some nearby social agency which could feed and safeguard the children during the father's absence, were all utilized by widowers in their efforts to hold their families together.

There were 81 reports of widowers who found boarding places for themselves and children. The records stated that in 39 of these cases the persons supplying board were relatives, and in four the widowers' families moved into the homes of neighbors, or invited married couples into their homes. However, there are obvious drawbacks to this plan of combining families even when there are not many children.

In reply to the inquiry, "What do these poor Italian laborers do with their large families when the mother dies?" a social worker said: "They invariably remarry. Relatives, neighbors or godparents look after the children during the customary period of mourning, and then the widower seeks a new wife." When such a program can be carried out, the family may be

more or less happily rehabilitated, and no assistance is needed from children's agencies.

Such simple solutions of the family problems were reported in only 93 of the 590 case records studied, and it is not surprising that the unsatisfactory and bad fathers were much less successful in finding new wives than those of better character. Remarriage was followed by the prompt discharge of the children to their reconstructed homes. Usually cases were closed when this took place, but there were a few reports of subsequent visits. The new wives made quite favorable impressions and appeared to be devoted to the welfare of their stepchildren.

Assistance from relatives was the first resource enlisted for the care of widowers' children when it was found to be impossible to maintain the normal family group with the labor of the father and older children or with such assistance or supervision as could be provided. Sympathy aroused during the emergency created by the mother's illness and death induced her kindred or those of the father to care for the children. Of course there would be no occasion for appeal to social agencies when these relatives were able and willing to continue this assistance. But frequently there was reluctance to maintain such service, or a desire to have it lightened to the care of one or two children. Larger families were scattered in several more or less temporary homes or the children shifted between grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins, returning at intervals to live with their fathers when they could receive them. Aunts, uncles and cousins, in the order named, gave shelter to the largest number, as there were reports of 197 placements in their homes, and grandparents with 117 placements came next in importance. Relatives whose kinship was not specified gave assistance 97 times, and older brothers and sisters 19. Godparents felt responsible for special care to children in 10 families. This large response from the greater family group might indicate slight need of assistance from strangers, but the help often was temporary or given to only one of the group of children for whom provision was necessary.

It does not follow that widowers as a class receive little or unsatisfactory assistance from relatives, but merely that the group of widowers in need of the services of social agencies is composed largely of those who find it difficult or impossible to get adequate and continuous help from relatives who are competent to care for their children. The grandparents seemed to find it particularly difficult to deal with the motherless children of their sons or daughters. Often they could not control the younger children and failed to understand the dangers from which adoles-

cent granddaughters needed protection. The older generation, particularly those of foreign birth, may find it difficult to understand or give helpful guidance to modern young persons.

There were 456 reports of more or less lengthy institutional care of children in the widowers' families. Orphanages or children's homes were helpful in many emergencies. Where children were found living under conditions which threatened their health and morals, immediate removal to such homes prevented further injury and made possible careful physical and mental examinations necessary for intelligent treatment. A period of training in orderly, wholesome habits was desirable for unfortunate victims of degrading environments. Without such observation and training the children could not be fitted into foster homes, or their objectionable habits might give serious offense. Immediate placement of the children of larger families could not always be made, so that institutions were utilized for their temporary care. Occasionally a widower wished board for his children during a comparatively brief period and gladly utilized an orphanage. Older girls who had gone astray profited by the period of intensive training in a special school before being placed in free or boarding homes.

Sixty-two of the widowers' children proved so seriously delinquent or defective that it was found necessary to commit them to state juvenile reformatories, or institutions for the care of the feeble-minded. About the same number (63) were sent to hospitals, homes for cripples or asylums for the insane. There were only five reports of children for whom the almshouse was the only available refuge during the period of readjustment.

*Foster Homes for Widowers' Children*

Board in foster homes was the most common method of caring for the widowers' children, as the case records reported 583 placements in homes and the number would be much larger if all the transfers and replacements were enumerated. The cost of care usually was paid by the father with assistance from the social agencies when there were more children than could be supported from the fathers' earnings or when the father suffered from irregularity of employment. Only 16 free homes were mentioned in the records and but 24 children were adopted. Eighteen young persons earned the whole or a part of their expenses by giving household or farm help.

Policies for dealing with children in foster homes have been so carefully standardized that it seems unnecessary to enter into

the details of the case histories, many of which show remarkable patience and persistence in dealing with complex family situations. Stated briefly, the standards which all of the agencies wished to enforce were:[1]

I. Careful selection of foster homes, attention being given to adaptability to the family standards to which the child had been accustomed, and to the educational and recreational opportunities of the neighborhoods in which they were located.

II. Physical examinations and medical treatments were provided for children having weakened, poorly developed or diseased bodies.

III. Psychological psychopathic examinations were not general but were obtained for children who showed exceptional backwardness in schools, personal peculiarities or unusual inability to adjust themselves to the families in which they were placed.

IV. Agents of the societies endeavored to maintain helpful and sympathetic relations with the children and their foster parents by means of personal visits and correspondence. Replacements often were necessary when it became evident that the foster homes failed to meet the growing needs of the children. Supervision was continued until the children returned to their re-established families or became entirely self-supporting.

The mere reading of case records does not permit a critical judgment of the extent to which the best standards of child care were realized, but a careful examination of many widower family histories supplied by the different co-operating agencies leaves the writer with the impression that, while there were well-defined policies for dealing with the children, there was a general failure in the preservation of family ties, or the discovery of methods for sustaining or developing the personalities of the widowers. It may be that the loss of the mother is one of those social calamities for which no adequate remedy can be found, yet the questions may be raised whether so general a loss of natural family ties is necessary, or whether any case work is successful when the persons most vitally concerned are condemned to so depressing and demoralizing a social outlook as confronted the majority of the widowers whose children passed to the custody of the various social agencies.

A little over one-fourth of the good fathers and one-fifth of the fair fathers retained the personal custody of their children at the time the case records were analyzed but this was true of less than one-tenth of the unsatisfactory and of only three per

[1] U. S. Children's Bureau *Standards of Child Welfare,* Publication No. 60.

TABLE 11. RELATION OF THE CHILDREN TO THEIR FATHERS AT THE TIME THE CASE RECORDS WERE ANALYZED

| Character of father | Total number of fathers | Fathers having the personal custody of their children | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Number | Per cent. |
| Total | 590 | 92 | 15.59 |
| Good | 162 | 45 | 27.77 |
| Fair | 128 | 26 | 20.31 |
| Unsatisfactory | 165 | 15 | 9.09 |
| Bad | 92 | 3 | 3.26 |
| No data | 43 | 3 | 6.97 |

cent. of the bad fathers. These differences show the greater reluctance to forfeit the advantages of daily contact with good fathers, or the greater unwillingness of such fathers to consent to separation from their children. But there must be a serious social loss when three out of four of the fathers recognized as exceptionally devoted and competent, and four out of five of those who were just ordinary fathers, but willing to do their duty, are deprived of that intimate daily contact with their growing children which is the significant social factor in family life. The tendency of the majority of the case records was away from the preservation of the natural family group, and it seems probable that when all the records are complete the proportion of children remaining with their fathers will be less rather than greater.

Many of the fathers realized fully the importance of maintaining the family group. The statement, "— is determined to keep his family together," occurs many times in the case records. Touching efforts to realize this desire, even though the social agencies found it necessary to place brothers and sisters in different foster homes, are described in some of the case records. For example, one devoted father had his little girl placed in the same community where her two brothers were boarded. He arranged frequent visits and did all in his power to stimulate affectionate interest between members of his separated family and finally succeeded in making plans which enabled the three children to board in the same foster home. Another father of six children devised a systematic visiting about scheme to which he devoted his Sundays and holidays. The children in one foster home were visited by those gathered from others. Such pilgrimages may have served the father's purpose, but the periodic arrival of groups of lively visitors was somewhat trying to the foster mothers.

However, the majority of the larger families could not profit even by such clumsy efforts to retain family affection. Often the children were scattered in different communities; one or more would be taken by relatives and others might be placed in different foster homes. Since desirable foster homes usually were found in rural or suburban communities, visits required an expenditure of time and money which poor wage-earners could ill afford.[1] The circumstances under which they met their children were apt to give these visits but little value for the promotion of family feeling, and it is not surprising that they were often infrequent.

Families ties were weakened also by differences in standards of living between the natural fathers and the foster parents. As already pointed out, the widowers who require assistance in order to care for their children come from a group of low-wage earners. The requirement that they contribute all that they can to the support of their children is made by the social agencies and often is enforced by court decrees. The margin of income left for the support of the father usually is small if not quite inadequate for a self-respecting standard of living. Family ties could not be preserved or strengthened by occasional visits from a shabby, sometimes uncouth father, who had little power of expression of such affection as he may have cherished for his children.

As has already been pointed out, nearly half the fathers had serious defects of personal character and many of them were drunkards. No children's agency would accept a foster home which would bring children into contact with a man so inferior in personal habits as these less desirable fathers, and quite naturally the foster parents did not encourage frequent visits from such men. In fact, it sometimes has been found necessary to require the fathers of children placed in foster homes to restrict their visits to those for which special permits are obtained from the placement agencies.

Fatherly love expresses itself in plodding services rather than in fondling and endearing speeches. The desire to protect or gratify wife and children is the most powerful motive for holding men faithful to the daily round of monotonous tasks to which the average wage-earners devote the larger portion of their waking hours. As already pointed out, but few of the widowers were engaged in occupations which have intrinsic interest. (Table 9.) Only one in a hundred was a professional worker. Nearly half

[1] Some of the case records showed persistent efforts to overcome these difficulties. Meetings between the children and parents were arranged at the offices of the social agencies, or efforts made to permit outings in the company of fathers.

labored at the highly specialized tasks of manufacturing and mechanical industries, and there were many who filled menial positions or served as unskilled laborers. Not only were their occupations uninteresting and poorly paid, but also frequently subject to seasonal unemployment. But little power of imaginative stimulus can be developed in such lives devoted to monotonous drudgery. The motive for labor and self-sacrifice must be fed by daily contact with the growing children whose lives give worth and brightness to the drab and sordid existence of their fathers. These widowers who supported children cared for in foster homes had forfeited the freedom and self-sufficiency of the single man without gaining the satisfactions of family life. Only those of exceptional devotion and self-control could find strong incentives for steady labor, and many could retain their self-respect with difficulty.

The common failure of the widowers to contribute regularly and adequately to the support of their children is explained by this loss of personal contact and affection. Since only one in six of the fathers retained the personal custody of his children, depressing conditions were developed in the large majority of the families. Efforts to collect by court decree were not apt to improve the family morale, and were ineffectual when there were recurring periods of seasonal unemployment which tax the energy and ingenuity even of those most eager to find work. It is not surprising that 30 of the weaker and more selfish fathers deserted their children.

Good case work has been defined as "those processes which develop personality through adjustments consciously effected, individual by individual, between men and their social environment."[1] If the children of the widowers had been full orphans we might concede that there was considerable success in meeting the requirements of good case work, but since over half of them had competent fathers, we must conclude that there was a general failure to realize this ideal. Insufficient attention was given to retaining for the fathers the social stimulus necessary for sustaining and developing their personalities; and, since the fathers normally were the most important social influence in the lives of their children, conditions which weakened them reacted adversely on the children. It is hoped that a realization of the nature and magnitude of this unsolved problem of child care may stimulate the devoted workers of child-caring agencies to efforts for establishing better standards of treatment for this group of difficult clients.

[1] Richmond, Mary E., What is Social Case Work? pp. 98-99.

Experimentation and standardization by private agencies followed by general adoption and by support from public funds is an established sequence in the development of social betterment activities. A more definite and purposeful focusing of this process on the problems of widowers' children may be promoted by a summary of the methods of care which came nearest to meeting the requirements of good case work.

Remarriage need not be considered since it takes the family out of the group which we are studying and since social workers cannot assume the rôle of matchmakers. One who urged this solution upon a bewildered Italian widower who was determined to keep his large family of young children, was embarrassed when he inquired about her family ties and showed his appreciation of her peculiar qualifications for the rôle of stepmother. Certainly hasty remarriage for the purpose of obtaining a housekeeper who will work without wages and cannot readily quit the job is not to be recommended as a means of maintaining family life. Occasionally a foreign-born widower succeeds in luring a capable woman from his birthplace, but as a rule a poor widower with a large family has but slight chance of finding a worthy substitute for the mother of his children.

There were three other plans which maintained the daily companionship needful for the family life of father and children: (1) Father and children boarded together, or lived with another family having a woman housekeeper. (2) Housekeeping, the father and children doing the work with some assistance or supervision from visitors. (3) Responsibility for supervising and feeding the children assumed by a neighboring relative, friend or institution, but the father and children left together when he could be at home.

The old-fashioned boarding house is becoming obsolete, and the use of a cheap lodging house with restaurant meals is impossible when there are several young children. Occasionally board can be found with a woman who will assume responsibility for the supervision of the children during the absence of the father. The arrangement then resembles that of the combined families. Such group living is apt to bring many conflicts of authority and interests, but is sometimes a satisfactory arrangement, when neither family has many children, when the two men of the household are congenial, or when the woman in charge is a relative of the widower.

The second and third plans were utilized as means of holding together larger families. When there are girls or boys of sufficient age and intelligence to make it possible for them to assume

some responsibility for the supervision of younger brothers and sisters and for the maintenance of household activities during the absence of the fathers, it is possible to organize the family life so that the home can be maintained. As already pointed out, this may place an undue strain on older children, but in many cases this is a lesser evil than the rupturing of family ties. When the third plan supplements the second, all the essential needs of the widower's family may be met. An older child, however intelligent and faithful, is not fully competent to control and care for younger brothers and sisters. There should be a readily accessible adult who could be appealed to for assistance and who would organize and supervise the household activities of the widower and his children. These conditions were met when widowers had older married daughters, other relatives, or reliable, married women friends who had apartments in the same building. These adult women did a part of the housekeeping and cared for the children during the absence of the fathers. In one family the children were fed at the table of this friend, but spent evenings with their father.

Such arrangements as these suggest the possibilities of a new form of the activities first organized by Octavia Hill. Why not have a tenement or apartment house reserved for the families of widowers? A common dining room and supervised play during the hours after school would insure wholesome living conditions, and personal consultation with the father might educate him to an appreciation of such standards of child care as are commonly developed when widows' pensions are efficiently administered.[1]

The expense of such a plan would be greater than could be met by the average of the widowers with large families who submit their problems to children's agencies. But it would not require a greater expenditure of services and money than what is now given when the children are boarded in the homes of strangers and supervised by placement agents. There can be no question but that such a plan would stimulate the fathers to greater exertions in order to earn the money necessary to supply their children's needs. As in the case of the widows, parent and children would be developed together and the powerful incentives supplied by these fundamental social ties would be enlisted for the stimulation of worthy parenthood in the fathers.

When foster homes are the only means available for the care of the children, then more attention could be given to systematic

[1] Nesbitt, Florence. *Standards of Public Aid to Children in Their Own Homes*, U. S. Children's Bureau Publication No. 118.

plans for bringing the children and father together under circumstances which would make possible an unembarrassed growth of sympathetic relations. We found no record of definite efforts to prepare older daughters for the responsibilities of re-established households.[1] If both father and children anticipated a reunion at some future date and were assisted in making plans for the realization of such a goal, there would be less loss of family feeling than seemed to be common when children were reared in foster homes. As it was, they usually suffered a loss of strong personal relations which play so important a part in preparing the individual for happy, helpful, social activities. There was but little evidence of the development of affectionate ties between the children and their foster parents; indeed the less stolid children were often restless and discontented, so that they quickly wore out their environments and replacements frequently became necessary.

## DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS BY REPRESENTATIVES OF CHILDREN'S AGENCIES

The suggestion that more definite efforts be made to reach mothers of families with instruction about methods of preventing the spread of common infectious diseases and the hygiene of pregnancy and childbirth was heartily endorsed.

Agreement was less complete when consideration was given to the possibility of forestalling the demoralization of the widowers' households by friendly visits shortly after the deaths of the mothers. An experienced worker declared that even a tactful and kindly visitor might fail to establish a right to make suggestions in many of the families. It was thought, however, that school visitors would have a natural and acceptable approach, and might be able to do something to safeguard the interests of the children.

"Greater emphasis should be given to the fact that replacement in foster homes is often prompted by efforts to meet more fully the needs of the growing child," declared one member of the group.

"We might well give more attention to keeping the children in touch with their fathers," said another.

"It is true that when the children are boarded in foster homes for several years the fathers are apt to lose interest, and often fail to make regular payments for the support of the children," testified the director of one of the largest children's agencies.

[1] The failure of such an effort, because of the early marriage of the well-trained daughter, was reported during the discussion of this report.

Fuller information was desired about the history of children who had been placed with relatives. Regret was expressed that there was not a more general tendency to seek expert advice about the care of children, even though no financial aid was required. Some agencies found that relatives welcomed supervision and preferred that the children's agency retain legal guardianship when the character of the father made it probable that controversies might arise.

There was no general endorsement of plans for remedying the weaknesses of the present treatment of widower cases. The early marriages of daughters of wage-earners discourages efforts to prepare them for taking charge of the re-established households of their fathers. It is difficult to find suitable opportunities for boarding children with their fathers, and conflicts of authority seem unavoidable. The plan for a widower apartment house was not received with enthusiasm, but rather with the concession that it might be worth a trial. The representative of the Family Welfare Society was confident that fully half of the fathers would resent vigorously any efforts to make changes in whatever family regimes they were maintaining.

PART II

# THE NEGLECTED CHILDREN OF WIDOWERS, OF ARRESTED PARENTS, AND OF FAMILIES BROKEN BY SEPARATION, DESERTION OR DIVORCE

STUDIES BASED ON CASE RECORDS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN

MADE BY

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BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
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# CHAPTER I

## THE NEGLECTED CHILDREN OF WIDOWERS

By Anna Ely Moorehouse

The children of widowers with small incomes are among those in greatest danger of neglect.[1] There is no loss of the means of support as in the case of widows, but they suffer seriously from the lack of personal care and supervision, as the father's income is rarely sufficient to provide a competent housekeeper. Out of 2,350 cases cared for by the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, from the first of November, 1917, to the first of November, 1918, 189 or 8 per cent. dealt with widows and 229 or 9.7 per cent. with widowers. Not only was there a larger number of widowers with neglected children, but it was more difficult to find means of caring for their children. The widow's situation can be greatly benefited by mere economic relief, but the widower needs, in addition, competent and devoted assistance in caring for his motherless children.

### *The Sources of Information*

The present study of neglected children of widowers is based on 500 case records of families cared for by the M. S. P. C. C., between 1914 and 1919, inclusive. These records fall into two groups, 365 which had been analyzed by officers of the Society, and 135 analyzed in the same manner for this study. Of the latter, 100 were studied intensively. They differed somewhat from the other 400 in that they were nearly all recent cases. This partially accounts for the facts that over 50 per cent. of the cases studied intensively were opened and closed within the same year, and only about 20 per cent. were under the Society's care over five years.

Since this study is limited to cases of the M. S. P. C. C.,

[1] In 1917 the Children's Aid Society of Pennsylvania reported that 98 or 15.3 per cent. of the 640 children cared for by the Society came from widowers' families. (36th Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society of Pennsylvania, for the year 1917.)

In England and Scotland during the years 1887 to 1891, 14 per cent. of the children received into industrial schools were motherless; in Baden, Germany, in 1891, 17.7 out of each 100 children received into correctional schools were from widowers' families. (Bonger, Criminality and Economic Conditions, 490.)

Of 741 children brought into the Chicago Juvenile Court in 1903-1904, 9.8 per cent. of the boys and 20.4 per cent. of the girls were motherless. (Breckenridge and Abbott, The Delinquent Child and the Home, 92.)

it does not show the difficulties and problems with which all widowers have to deal, but it does point out the forms of neglect and the characteristics of an important group whose children are neglected.

*Significant Family Data*

Over 38 per cent. of the parents whose birthplaces were reported were native born. A slightly smaller per cent. were born in the British possessions, 19 per cent. of these coming from Ireland. With the exception of one Chinese and one Australian father, the remaining 24 per cent. were born in the various European countries; the largest single group of these was the Italian, it being almost 9 per cent. (Table 1.)

Three out of five (59 per cent.) of the fathers and mothers were Catholic. (Table 2.) This is a larger proportion than one would expect when looking at the table of birthplaces, and probably indicates that a considerable number of those born in the United States were the second generation of people who came from Catholic countries. Less than 2 per cent. were Hebrews, although the number of Jews in the population is large.

Most of the widowers were in occupations requiring only a small amount of skill and training. Laborers and factory operatives were the two largest groups, numbering 78 and 80, respectively. (Table 3.) The fact that wage-earners in the manufacturing industries in Greater Boston averaged less than $800 annual income in 1917[1] shows what a small amount most of these widowers had with which to support their families.

In 89 or 17.8 per cent. of the families there were 3 children. This is the modal group, but 16.4 per cent. had 5 children, while 18.2 per cent. had 6 children or more. The average number of children in each family which had to be supported by the low wages of the widower was 3.7. (Table 5.)

There are two periods when a mother's care is most necessary to the welfare of children; in their younger years they are dependent on her for their physical welfare, and then when the adolescent years are reached their moral welfare depends upon the mother's sympathy and guidance. This is particularly true of the girls who need a large amount of supervision when 12 to 16 years old. Only a small proportion of the widowers' children belonged to the first group, 10 per cent. being 4 years of age or under. Almost one-third of the children in widowers' families, however, were found in the second age group, that is, between

[1] Massachusetts Statistics of Manufacturers, 1917, p. 30.

the ages of 13 and 18.[1] At this time the influence of the school is forfeited since this is the age when the children go to work. (Table 4, Chart IV.) Juvenile delinquency develops most frequently during this period as is shown by the Chicago Juvenile Court records. Of 14,183 delinquent children brought into the court, 22.0 per cent. of the boys and 26.3 per cent. of the girls were fifteen years old. The abrupt change from school to work, the nervous strain resulting from the new activities and longer hours, coming as they usually do at a critical period of physical development, would be hard for any child, but it is especially difficult for one who is deprived of a normal home life. In addition, the father is apt to consider careful supervision unnecessary.

*Case I.* An illustration of a situation which might easily have led to the girl's downfall was that of Jennie ——. She was fifteen and, at the time the family was reported to the Society, her mother had been dead several years. Mrs. ——, who had been a close friend for some time, attempted some supervision. Jennie's brothers called this woman "mother" and went to her house every day after school, but Jennie refused to have anything to do with her after a remonstrance against standing on street corners visiting with men acquaintances. Jennie, who spent on her clothes most of the money received from two brothers in France, made herself very conspicuous by her flirtations with conductors and motormen. Her father was a good man, but felt no responsibility for his children, and usually spent his evenings away from home. Finally, an agent of the Society visited the family and succeeded in convincing Jennie of the error of her ways.

A larger number of housekeepers was found in the families of widowers than in those of arrested or of divorced, separated or deserting parents. The housekeepers, however, whom widowers were able to get were often distinct menaces to the families.

*Case II.* This danger is illustrated by the case of Mr. ——, who had been married twice. At the time the case was reported to the M. S. P. C. C., he had a housekeeper with whom he had immoral relations. Edward, the oldest boy, aged 15, said that the language used and the actions performed by his father and the housekeeper were indecent. The schoolmaster also told of the way in which Edward and the other children were treated at home and of the obscene acts committed in their presence. Ed-

[1] This differs from the age distribution of widowers' children cared for by other social agencies. (Table 3A of previous report.) The adolescent groups were smaller than those of children 4 to 12 years old. Evidently the M. S. P. C. C. intervened frequently for the prevention of delinquency.—L. E.

ward was examined by Doctor Healy, who reported him as "years older than he should be in regard to sexual knowledge."

*Case III.* Another case shows the fate of a widower's family in charge of a slattern. Emma ——, the housekeeper, and Edward, the child, were found at the family home, which was a small, unfinished house of five rooms, set in a disorderly yard. The house was filthy, with soiled clothes and rags lying around on the floors. The housekeeper, who was a dirty, lazy-looking woman, said that she was married but separated from her husband. Evidently the relations between her and the widower were immoral, for the father acknowledged that conditions were very wrong but he declared, "It is impossible in these times to engage a housekeeper who is a moral woman."

More relatives were living with the widowers than with the arrested or separated parents. In a few families the relatives were a danger, but in most instances they were a help to the father in caring for his children. Female relatives who were assisting in the care of the children were found in 71 of the 86 families in which relatives were present.

Lodgers were found in forty of the 500 families studied. The presence of male lodgers is a decided risk for a young girl when there is no mother or older woman in the house, but such a situation was found in only 13 instances.

In over one-half of the cases, however, no one was found living with the family, and the father and children were left after the mother's death to work out their own salvation as best they could.

The characteristics of the members of the widowers' families seem to indicate that they belonged to a more normal group than either the arrested or the divorced, separated or deserting parents. (Tables 6-A, 6-B and 7.) Nevertheless, it must be remembered that the number given as mentally and physically defective is an under- rather than an over-estimate due to the fact that such characteristics were not reported unless there had been formal examinations. This fact also accounts for the larger amount of defectiveness in the children, as it was much easier to have the children examined than their parents. Nine per cent. of the mothers were reported as having had tuberculosis and probably the proportion was even greater, as this disease was one of the most common causes of their deaths.

In many cases the father was a dependable, hard-working man, who was fond of his children and wished to keep his family together, but it was impossible for him to work and to care for his children at the same time.

*Case IV.* An illustration was a family where six children, the oldest of whom was eleven, were left motherless at the time of the influenza epidemic. The father had tried unsuccessfully a number of housekeepers. Three attempts were made by social agencies to place the children in a family. The father would promise faithfully to give the children up, but each time when the day arrived he could not make up his mind to part with them. The father's work kept him away from three o'clock in the afternoon until one in the morning. The children stayed out on the streets late at night and handled kerosene lamps when alone. Social workers were convinced that lack of supervision was a danger to the health and even to the lives of these children and an agent of the Society finally persuaded the father that it was necessary for him to give them up.

*The Neglect of the Children*

In 38 out of 100 cases the families were reported to the M. S. P. C. C. by public agencies, the most common of these being school officials. (Table 8.) This shows that there is already a certain feeling of responsibility on the part of the State, which needs, however, to be extended and organized so that all neglected children will be given prompt care and protection. In 30 cases charitable or religious agencies and in 17 cases relatives reported widowers' children in need of attention. In a number of instances in which the relatives complained, it was found upon investigation that the difficulties were due to religious differences. Protestant and Catholic grandmothers sometimes made mutual complaints of improper treatment or unsuitable home conditions while struggling to gain the custody of grandchildren.

In 82 of the 100 cases studied intensively, the children had not been seriously injured at the time the family was reported. This indicates that, in Massachusetts at least the social agencies are well organized and come into the majority of cases soon enough to help.

Physical neglect was the most common complaint in each of the three types of families studied. (Tables 9, 10 and 11, Chart V.) It is natural that this should be given as the most common form, as it is the most easily detected. Physical cruelty was reported in less than 5 per cent. of the widowers' cases, showing that risks were due to failure to maintain proper standards of care rather than to positive mistreatment. However, much moral neglect and lack of supervision were reported. In most cases the former meant contact with drunkenness and sexual immorality.

Lack of supervision is the sort of thing that one would expect to find in a widower's family.

*Case V.* An example of this was the case of E——, whose mother died about six months before the case was reported. The paternal home was scantily furnished and very dirty. One son was living with his father, the other son, E——, had left home to stay with his chum. Later he ran away to New York, but was brought back to Boston, declared delinquent by the Juvenile Court and sent to Shirley. It is not probable that this boy would have been so difficult to manage if he had received more supervision and better care at home.

Girls are in even greater need of this supervision than boys. The case of Emma —— illustrates the danger met by a motherless girl.

*Case VI.* In the South Station, Jennie —— and Emma —— were seen to attract the attention of a sailor and a civilian. Both girls were conspicuously dressed in extremely short dresses, had bleached hair, and a great deal of powder and paint. After much persuasion the girls agreed to go to the hospital for examination, and Emma was found to be diseased. When the home was visited, Emma was there keeping house for her father and the other children. She acknowledged that she had been indiscreet in her search for pleasure, but said that she had talked with her priest, had started going to church, and had promised to be a good girl and worthy of the mother whose memory she devotedly loved.

This girl needed personal care and interest in her desires and ideals. While the absence of the mother[1] was the chief cause, it was not the only explanation of the neglect of these children. In 32 of the 100 cases and 280 of the 500, drunkenness on the part of the father was an added difficulty. (Tables 7 and 9.) In some instances the sorrow and trouble resulting from the mother's death caused the man to drink, which in turn made matters go from bad to worse.

*Case VII.* This case shows the need of supervision, especially during the period of readjustment. The father grew discouraged in trying to care for his six children after his wife's death. He took to drinking, lost his job and then the children suffered because of lack of food and clothing. The case was reported to the Society and through its efforts the father was started again, but not until it was too late to save the oldest girl, who had become pregnant. The father, when interviewed later,

[1] One of the teachers of the Continuation School in speaking of her work said: "These cases of children without mothers are terrible. A bad mother is better than no mother at all."

said that he was not drinking and was making good money. He admitted that it was largely his fault that Mary got into trouble.

Had there been some means of reporting the family to an agency when the mother died, and had this agency supervised the family and helped the father when he was trying to readjust his life, these troubles might have been averted.

A lack of personal interest or of a sense of responsibility toward his children was another characteristic found in a number of the fathers. Such a father was that of the D—— case which came to the attention of the Society through the truant officer.

*Case VIII.* The agent went to the house where Gertrude lived with her cousin, Mrs. D——. The mother died at the time of the child's birth and the father then placed her with his cousin. Mrs. —— and Gertrude lived in one room, which was dark and dirty, and they were both unwashed. Mrs. D—— stated that Gertrude was too superior to go either to the sisters' school or to the public schools and that she was teaching the child. Upon further inquiry this was found to be untrue. Gertrude was then taken to the court and declared neglected. The Home for Destitute Catholic Children, in whose care she was placed, transferred her to a very nice family. These people became very fond of her and assumed her guardianship. Although the father was sending his cousin ten dollars a week for taking care of his daughter, he evidently had no personal interest in her. He never knew that the child had been removed from Mrs. D——'s care until he was notified that the latter had been placed in an insane asylum.

In some cases the father not only took no personal interest in his children, but also shifted the financial care onto someone else. In a good many of these low-grade families, when the mother died the one thing that held the family together was gone and the father lost all sense of responsibility toward his children.

*Case IX.* An example was the case of Mr. M—— and his four children. Mrs. M——, wife of George, the paternal uncle, reported in March, 1910, that she had cared for Mary and James since October, when the father went to the hospital. The children had been left in charge of a drunken housekeeper who soon deserted her post. The father then agreed to pay the aunt two dollars a week for each child with her, but up to March he had paid her a total of twelve dollars, although he was earning $13.50 a week. Her burdens were increased in February, when the father sold his furniture and turned out the other two boys, who came to her for care.

The Society took the case to court and the father was found guilty of neglect of minor children and sentenced to three months in the House of Correction.

A characteristic complaint coming to the Society was:

"Miss G—— asks that we compel the father to support his daughter, who has been in the Home some time. The father owes over $125."

When the mother dies, friction, which she is usually able to keep in check, increases. Moreover, if the oldest daughter tries to keep house for the family, she is at a disadvantage, as the other children do not feel that they must obey her and, with no one at the head of the household, the family is very apt to fall apart. The difficulties are well illustrated by the following case:

*Case X.* John, aged 19, and Anna, aged 20, said that they had talked over plans for renting and furnishing a tenement. They had been somewhat discouraged before the agent's call, as they hesitated to go into debt when their father was unreliable. However, they finally agreed to get a tenement where Mary could keep house for them all and the income of the three children who were working would be sufficient to run the establishment.

A week later the father, Anna and George were at home. They had a very clean, newly-painted tenement of four rooms and bath. They had not much furniture as yet but were taking a great deal of interest in the place and intended to add to their stock in the near future. The father had not been drinking for the past two weeks and vowed that he would leave liquor alone.

A month later another call was made. The family were all at home. The father was drunk and a good deal of friction had developed. The father said that he found it difficult to control any of the children because they did not feel toward him as they should towards the father and head of the family. He admitted that he was drinking a little Saturday evenings, but stoutly maintained that this was not the chief reason for the difficulties in the home, which arose principally because there were too many would-be bosses and no one in control.

About four months later Anna said that she was ready to give up the housekeeping, as the efforts to maintain a satisfactory home had failed. The father was drinking again and said that he would not give up his pay for the family. James was truant and was "going bad." There was constant friction in the home and she could not endure it longer.

Seven months later in the court the school officer reported that the home had been broken up about two months before.

The father and James were boarding with Mrs. D——, a place which he did not consider proper for the child. In view of this and the fact that James had been truant from school, the court was asked to commit him to the Middlesex Training School.

The father told the agent that Anna was working in a factory; John was working and boarding; George had been committed about two months before for "breaking and entering." He would be released in about a month and was assured of work. Mary was working for a dentist, with whom she was living. The father explained that there was such friction in the home that it had seemed best to break it up.

Immorality on the part of the father increases the probability of neglect of the children. Sexual immorality was reported for thirteen out of one hundred widowers, but only for ten out of one hundred fathers in arrested families. The smaller number given in the latter group is probably due to the fact that this type of immorality would be more likely to be looked for and detected in widowers' families.

Sexual immorality was a factor in the following case:

*Case XI.* The grandmother lived with the four children. They had three rooms, which were poorly furnished but neat and well kept. The grandmother was of good appearance. She said that she had been living there ever since the mother died, about six months before, that soon after her death the father began drinking rather heavily and going about with Mrs. G——. At one time the father went away with Mrs. G—— and was gone for four weeks, leaving the grandmother only ten dollars. He returned home for a short time and then left again to live with Mrs. G——, this time giving the grandmother nothing for the support of the children.

The case was brought into court by the M. S. P. C. C. The father was sentenced to the House of Correction for six months for non-support and eight months for illegal cohabitation. He appealed the case and the sentence was repealed. This experience, however, either frightened him or awakened him to the need of meeting his responsibilities, because he stopped drinking and began to work regularly for the support of his family.

Only one case of feeble-mindedness and insanity of the fathers was reported out of the hundred records studied intensively. (Table 7.) Neglect of the children would be expected in each of these instances. Subnormal mentality and poor stock are given as 2 per cent. and 4 per cent., respectively, and a lack of a sense of responsibility as 6 per cent. When drunkenness, sexual immorality and a lack of a sense of responsibility, which

are not always signs of degeneracy, are excluded, degeneracy was only shown in 9 per cent. of the fathers. This seems to indicate a normal group.

*Activities of the M. S. P. C. C. While Caring for the Widowers' Families*

The work of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children is mainly protective and disciplinary. The Society co-operates closely with the various social agencies and transfers to them activities other than protection and discipline. Preventive rather than punitive aspects of the work are stressed. The desire of the Society is to keep the family together. When it becomes necessary to separate the family, however, the children are turned over to a child-placing agency.

Court actions were used in 234 of the 500 cases. Fifty-two of the actions were for the discipline of the parents. This is a much smaller number than in the other two types of families; 104 of the actions in the cases of divorced, separated or deserting parents, and 157 in the cases of arrested parents, were for parental discipline. The smaller number of widowers in need of court discipline is another indication that they belonged to a more normal group. (Table 13.)

In 30 of the hundred families studied intensively the M. S. P. C. C. handled the cases without assistance from other agencies, but in 45 it was necessary to call in disciplinary agencies. The children in 21 families where shelter or temporary care were given usually were sent back to their own homes or to the homes of relatives. Taking the children away for a time often made the father more attentive to his obligations, as is shown by the following case:

*Case XII.* A family was visited and the three children were found getting their noon-day meal in a rather crude way. The mother was dead and these children had been taking care of themselves for six years. They tried to do the best they could, apparently, but this was not up to the standard of care which children should have. The filthy bedding had not been washed for months—possibly years. The sanitary arrangements were very poor and might be productive of diseases. Complaints were made by the M. S. P. C. C. against the children as neglected and against the father for neglect. The children were placed in the care and custody of the Home for Destitute Catholic Children.

The father then got a housekeeper and asked to have his children returned. The home was again investigated and found

to be in good condition. The housekeeper seemed to be a capable woman so that it was decided to return the children.

In 27 of the 100 families it was necessary to enlist home-finding or child-placing agencies, notwithstanding the Society's desire to keep the families together. In a number of instances the families had already been broken up before they came under the care of the M. S. P. C. C. Under these circumstances the families rarely were brought together again. In 24 cases, aid and training in the home were given, and in 22, agencies were enlisted by the M. S. P. C. C. to care for the health of the children.

In 21 of the 100 cases and in 68 of the 500, the M. S. P. C. C. disposed of the cases by placing the children in institutions. (Tables 14 and 15.) In the other 79 of the 100 the children were cared for in families. In 41 instances the children were either retained in or returned to their own families and in 29 they were cared for by relatives, making a total of 70 cases in which it was not necessary to call in strangers. This illustrates the policy of the Society of keeping families together or at least of keeping children out of institutions. The larger number of relatives caring for the children in the widowers' families than in the families in which the parents had been arrested or in which there had been divorce, separation or desertion, shows that there was a greater feeling of family responsibility.

In 33 of the 100 reports studied intensively it was estimated that the purpose for which the family was brought under the M. S. P. C. C. was accomplished. In 28 there was improvement, in 14 the cases were transferred to other agencies, and in 17 no definite action was taken. Various reasons were given for this failure to act, such as lack of evidence or change in conditions due to the remarriage of the father or the return of an older daughter. In only 8 of the cases was failure reported because the plans were blocked or did not work out. (Table 16.)

*Conclusions*

In some cases the families must be broken up, but, both for the sake of the children and of the father, this should never be done unless it is absolutely necessary. The father needs to shoulder his responsibilities, and the children need as nearly normal a home life as possible. The cases studied indicate that breaking up the family led the father to abandon his family responsibilities. If he could get a relative or neighbor to board his children it often was not long before he was paying very

little or nothing for their support. The problem of holding the family together after the mother's death is a very difficult one and often impossible of solution.

Young children under school age may be cared for in the day nursery; there remains the problem of proper supervision for the children of school age. It might prove a help if the schools undertook an extension of the day nursery idea, making all those children who need it report after school for an hour or two of supervised play.

According to the records of the Chicago Juvenile Court the greatest amount of delinquency occurs at the age of fifteen.[1] Eleven and two-tenths per cent. of the children in the widowers' families studied were 15 and 16 years of age. (Table 4, Chart IV.) The extension of the school age from 14 to 16 would help these children through this critical period. The nervous strain would not be so great in school as when at work and the teacher and school visitor would still have a hold on them.

Supervision during the period of readjustment after the wife's death is one of the most necessary things in the solution of the problem of the widower's family. Much discouragement and lowering of standards might be averted if the widower had some help at this time. In addition, constant instead of casual supervision is needed throughout the minority of the children.

Because of the fact that it is difficult for a private society with a limited income to give this supervision and because the widowers are a group who are always present and will always need help, it seems that there should be some form of State supervision. In so far as it is possible to do so, the public should guarantee to motherless children an opportunity equal to that of other groups in the population to grow into normal citizens.

[1] Breckinridge and Abbott. The Delinquent Child and the Home, p. 26.

## CHAPTER II

## THE NEGLECTED CHILDREN OF ARRESTED PARENTS

By Barbara H. Wright

### *Introduction*

Criminal parents are jailed in order that society may be protected; but society has failed to give protection to their abandoned children. By enduring the destitution and social stigma which accompany arrest, these children have shared the penalty of their parents' misdeeds. As long as the purpose of courts and penal institutions was largely punishment, this disregard for the children in families of criminals was not surprising, but now that the purpose is increasingly reform and re-education, children ought to be protected from the evil influences resulting from the arrest of their parents. This investigation was undertaken for the purpose of determining the special hazards to which these children are exposed, and the agencies which should be developed for their protection.

### *Sources of Information*

Five hundred case records of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children supplied the data for this study of neglected children whose parents had been arrested. In choosing the cases, the files for 1916 to 1918 were examined and those cases were selected which had prison terms checked for either father or mother. Analysis cards for 391 cases were obtained in this way. These were supplemented by 109 cases from the files of 1914. A different schedule had been used by the Society in the analysis of the latter, so that it was necessary to read and re-analyze these records on cards similar to those used by the Society for the 1916-1918 cases. Thus a body of material of uniform significance was obtained. One hundred cases were more intensively studied and additional information was recorded on a supplementary schedule. These cases had been thoroughly investigated by agents of the Society, as all of them had been under their supervision for at least three years, 10 for nine years, 9 for ten years and 12 for eleven years.

The limitations of a study based on these case records were recognized at the outset. Difficulties were encountered which

are inevitable when an effort is made to reduce to tabular form the varied details of family histories. Furthermore, these cases do not represent a typical group of families in which the parents had served prison terms. Not only had the parents been arrested, but added to this was the fact that the children had been neglected, so that it cannot be assumed that conclusions will be applicable to the entire class of criminal families. Such a study will indicate the conditions which *may* appear in families in which the parents had been in prison and the risks to which children in such families *may* be exposed.

*General Characteristics of the Families*

The parents who had served sentences were for the most part either American, Canadian or Irish. Almost one-half of those whose nativities were reported were born in the United States. (Table 1.) Thirty-six per cent. were immigrants from British possessions, the largest group of these, 19.5 per cent., came from Ireland. The next largest group, 13.3 per cent., were Canadians. Less than one-fifth of the total number of parents were immigrants from non-English-speaking countries. There were not one-half as many Italians as there were in the group of widowers' families that came before the same Society. That the Irish and Canadians were the largest groups of foreigners was to be expected, since this is true in the entire population of Massachusetts. Four-fifths of the parents belonged to racial groups which share the traditions and ideals common to English-speaking peoples. Almost three-fourths of the entire number of parents were affiliated with the Catholic Church. (Table 2.)

The economic status of these families is indicated roughly by a tabulation of the occupations of the parents. (Table 3.) Unskilled work claimed the largest number of the fathers; laborers, mill and factory operatives, longshoremen and draymen include over 50 per cent. of the men whose occupations were reported. Only about 14 per cent. of the men had learned skilled trades. The men engaged in business, public service, and professional work made up less than 5 per cent. of the total. One-half of the fathers were evidently in occupations characterized by low wages, lack of skill and irregularity of employment.[1] Those who had learned trades had a somewhat better income and less unemployment. The number in occupations indicating a superior mentality and a long period of training was almost negligible.

[1] In the manufacturing industries (including mill and factory operatives) the average wage for 1917 was less than $800 per year. See Massachusetts Statistics of Manufactures, 1917, p. 30.

Only 148 of the 500 mothers were reported as working outside the home, and even in these cases they only worked periodically. Eighty-five of these were employed in household occupations which included day workers, domestics, housekeepers and restaurant employees. Factories and mills gave work to 49. Evidently these women became temporary workers in unskilled occupations in order to supply the economic necessities of their families.

*Number and Age of Children*

The total number of children in these 500 families in which parents had been committed was 1,818, or an average of 3.6 children per family. (Table 4, Chart IV.) Families of two and four children were the most frequent, there being 102 families with two and 101 with four children. (Table 5.) In 30 per cent. of the families there were five or more children. This combination of large families and low incomes suggests that destitution may have been an important factor in promoting the criminality of the parents and the neglect of their children.

The greatest numbers of children in the families involving arrested parents were found in the groups who were between nine and eleven years old (Table 4); in contrast to the families of widowers where the most frequent ages for children were 13 to 15, and those involving divorce and desertion where the most frequent ages were 7 to 9. The families of arrested parents apparently were reported to the M. S. P. C. C. in time to gain protection for the greatest number of their children before the ages when delinquency would develop.

*Family Characteristics*

A study of the characteristics of members of the families shows that both physically and mentally the mothers were in a worse condition than the fathers. (Table 6.) A very small amount of venereal disease was reported for the parents, but no doubt this is underestimated in the Society's reports, because usually the parents were not given physical examinations. No fathers were reported as feeble-minded and only one was insane, but 31 were considered subnormal. Epilepsy, insanity and psychoneurosis were more frequent among the mothers, 21 of whom were reported as definitely feeble-minded and 46 were considered subnormal. Had the subnormal group been given psychological examinations, probably more feeble-mindedness would have been discovered. Added to this it must be noted

that 33 families had one feeble-minded child, 3 had two feeble-minded children, and in 3 families three or more children were feeble-minded. This tendency toward subnormal mentality is a striking characteristic in these families. (Tables 6-A, 6-B and 7.)

That mental defectiveness is characteristic of the class to which they belong is further indicated by a study of women prisoners. Only 30 per cent. of the women who had been committed to the State Reformatory of New York were reported as mentally normal.[1] A psychological analysis of the women in the Reformatory for Women at Framingham, Mass., in 1915, showed that one-sixth were feeble-minded, one-half subnormal or dull, and only one-third were of fair or good mentality.[2] This analysis supplies a rough basis for judging the mentality of the mothers in the 500 families of the present investigation since two-fifths of them had served prison terms.

Three-fifths of the fathers and two-fifths of the mothers in the 500 group were reported as alcoholic, and drunkenness was charged to two-thirds of the mothers in 100 families which were studied more intensively. (Tables 6-A and 7.) This overindulgence in drink was the most frequent cause of arrest. To the families it meant quarreling, drunken brawls, immorality, emptied pay envelopes, pawned furniture and loss of work. When the mothers were alcoholic there were the added factors of homes in disorder, meals not prepared and children running wild.

Prohibition legislation has already reduced materially the number of arrests for drunkenness and it will leave society to handle a very much smaller number of families in which arrests have occurred for more serious offenses.[3] Supervision of children in families involving arrest will, therefore, be simpler and less expensive.

Immorality was reported for 47 fathers and 145 mothers (Table 6-A), and it was charged of one-fourth of the parents in the 100 families whose records were studied intensively. (Table 7.) Next to drunkenness this was the most frequent cause of arrest among the mothers. It was usually accompanied by alcoholism and makes a condition of vice from which the State

[1] Seventeenth Annual Report of the New York Reformatory for Women, 1918, pp. 44-45.

[2] Imbecile 1.2 per cent., moron 14.8 per cent., subnormal 29 per cent., dull 20.4 per cent., fair 13.6 per cent., good 21 per cent.
Hodder, Jessie D., The Next Step in Correctional Treatment of Girls and Women, Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work, 1918, p. 117.

[3] The total arrests for drunkenness in the State of Massachusetts for the month of July were 11,444 in 1917, 7,218 in 1918, and 2,319 in 1919. Six Months of It—Survey, January 17, 1920, p. 418.

must protect the child if he is to have an opportunity to become a normal citizen. Poor stock was noted in 7 per cent. of the parents. This was checked when the parents and their relatives appeared shiftless or incompetent. Degeneracy in some form was found in 95 of the 100 families whose case histories were studied intensively.

The court histories of the parents were what one would expect from such a degraded group. At least one parent had been imprisoned in each of the 500 cases and in 29 families both parents had been committed. Almost two-fifths of the fathers had been on probation and one-half had other court records. The court histories of the mothers include 129 on probation, 192 in prison and 111 having other court records. When one considers the influence of the examples set by parents, it seems unpardonable that men and women of this type should be allowed to rear without supervision the future citizens of the State. The results of their influence are seen in 72 families, in which from one to three children were on probation, 18 families which had children in penal institutions, and 22 families in which children had other court records.

In 407 families the members of the households included only the parents and their children; in 53, relatives were present; and in 47, or less than one-tenth of the total number, there were lodgers. These strangers were found less frequently in the criminal families than in those where there were divorced, separated or deserting parents.

The following summaries taken from case records present more graphically typical families of the group studied:

*Case I.* A degenerate mother, who had been arrested for drunkenness, made the G—— home an unfit place for her five children ranging in age from a baby in arms to a boy of ten. The father was an iron-moulder who earned fairly good wages, but both parents drank to excess and quarreled continuously. Once in a fit of rage the mother threw the Christmas dinner out the window and, had not the father intervened, the baby would have followed. She was examined and committed to a hospital for the insane, where she only remained a month. Later the father died, the mother was recommitted to the hospital and the children placed in boarding homes.

*Case II.* The irregular school attendance of a twelve-year-old boy living in a dirty, poorly-kept home lacking dishes and beds caused an attendance officer to report the family. Excessive drinking, noisy parties and bad companions had caused the father to be arrested once and the mother 17 times.

*Means by Which Cases of Neglect Were Reported*

Over three-fifths of the 100 cases of neglect intensively studied were reported by public agencies, including the police, parole and probation officers, and school officials.[1] (Table 8.) That the police reported 38 of the 100 families shows that they have developed a feeling of responsibility toward the children whose parents they find it necessary to arrest. School officials reported only six of the cases, but as the duties of the visiting teacher are developed, more frequent co-operation in reporting neglect may be expected. Unfortunately it is impossible to compare the number of cases reported as in need of protection, with the number that should have been reported, but it is evident that these officials could be organized so that they would give prompt notice to the proper agencies of the needs of children whose parents have been arrested. The need for such prompt preventive work is evident from the fact that in this group of 100 families there were eight where there were one or more children who were seriously ill and six where children already were delinquent.

*Forms of Neglect From Which the Children Suffered*

Physical neglect of children was found in three-fourths of the 500 families of arrested parents and it was judged by the M. S. P. C. C. to be the predominant factor in almost one-third of these families. (Tables 9 and 10.) Insufficient food or clothing, inadequate shelter and lack of cleanliness were the usual forms of physical neglect. An emaciated child whose clothing is filthy and ragged more quickly enlists the sympathy of the community than one subject to the more insidious but less apparent forms of moral neglect resulting from alcoholism and immorality in the home. Typical examples of physical neglect are shown in the following case records:

*Case III.* Two poorly-clad children living in an ill-kept home of two rooms and cared for by an immoral, alcoholic mother who was afterward judged feeble-minded, were reported by the police. The father was in the House of Correction, and there was nothing for the children to eat but an insufficient amount of bread and milk.

*Case IV.* A baby left all day in a bureau drawer caused the landlady to report Mr. and Mrs. H——, who were rooming in her house. The parents excused themselves by saying that they could not get away from the restaurant where they had just

[1] Public agencies reported only 23 of the 100 families involving divorce, separation or desertion, and 38 of the 100 widowers' families.

obtained work and had forgotten to telephone the landlady about the baby. Later the child was again reported as bruised and neglected and in need of hospital care.

Protection from physical cruelty is at the present time one of the lesser functions of the M. S. P. C. C. Although physical cruelty appeared as a factor in 7.6 per cent. of the 500 cases, it was only judged predominant in 1.6 per cent. (Table 10.) Medical neglect was the cause of intervention in only 2.2 per cent. of the families. Non-support was second in importance to physical neglect, as it appeared in almost two-thirds and was considered predominant in about one-fifth of the families studied. Non-support included both neglect to support in marriage and neglect to support illegitimate children. The following illustrates neglect of this kind:

*Case V.* A white baby whose mother was on trial for adultery, was being cared for by a colored woman. She had not mistreated the baby, but she complained that no clothing had been supplied, and since the mother had ceased to pay the board she could keep the child no longer.

In 30 per cent. of the 500 families low social standards rather than any definite improper treatment of the children made intervention necessary. In one-third of these cases (Table 10) neglect of moral standards other than sex was the primary reason for interference. Usually this meant drunkenness, excessive profanity and quarreling or the presence of bad companions in the home. This is illustrated in the following:

*Case VI.* Drunken parents "whose language was at all times vile and abusive" proved a questionable influence for four unkempt children living in a filthy home of three rooms. While the father was in jail for neglect of the children the mother was caught smuggling liquor to him. She was arrested also and the children spent the night in the almshouse. The court left the children with the parents for one more trial, but later the three oldest were placed in boarding homes. In order that she might work, the mother boarded out the baby, who had been left with her, but she failed to pay the board, so this child also was removed.

Neglect of sex standards was found as a condition in almost one-half of the cases studied and was the primary reason for the Society's interference in 17.6 per cent. of the 500 families. (Tables 9 and 10.) Illegitimacy was checked in over one-fifth of the records. Children in these families are frequently under the influence of mothers arrested for street walking or keeping disorderly houses. They are also exposed to immorality resulting

from having lodgers or bad companions in the home. After children living under these conditions become delinquent the State tries to re-educate them through training schools and parole.

*Case VII.* During a period of nearly five years the M. S. P. C. C. was endeavoring to give protection to the five children of a drunken Norwegian carpenter and an immoral American mother. Attention was first called to the situation when the undertaker reported that in the absence of the parents he had found the dead body of an infant on the sofa while three children were playing about the room. At the time the father was in jail for drunkenness. The stepson, a boy of 14, was committed to the Home for Destitute Catholic Children for three months for waywardness, and after a continuance of neglect proceedings for six months, the girls of 9, 5 and 3 years were permitted to remain with their parents.

The case was reopened two years later, when the family was found living in a tent after having been ejected from their house. No action was taken, although the parents and an uncle living with them quarreled continuously and drank to excess. Later in the same year the police observed the children at 11 P. M. waiting outside a saloon in which their parents were drinking. The children were judged neglected but were again left with the parents.

After another interval of two years the family was found living in a disreputable house which had been raided as disorderly. Both parents were drinking, the father was out of work, and the mother earned a precarious living by scrubbing. When visited, the little girls who were doing the housework were without food, as the mother had deserted them for a week. The situation had become desperate, the parents indulged in continuous quarreling and vulgar language, and the mother had immoral relations with men who came to the house. At times she acted like a maniac, throwing kettles and pans out of the windows. The three girls were placed with the Home for Destitute Catholic Children until they could be supplied with boarding homes.

*Forms of Neglect Found in Cases Studied Intensively*

The intensive study of 100 cases made possible a more detailed analysis of the forms of physical neglect and revealed the extent to which the children suffered from lack of parental supervision and failure to enforce school attendance. (Table 11, Chart V.) In almost one-half of these families physical neglect meant inadequate food, clothing and shelter, and in one-fifth of

them it meant lack of cleanliness. Absence of supervision in three-fourths of the cases was an added hazard not shown by the M. S. P. C. C. analysis of neglect. This was checked when the mother was too degenerate, either mentally or morally, to give her children proper care or when she was away from home either at work or in a penal institution. Usually a combination of several forms of neglect was found in one family, an average of over three having been checked for each family of the 100 group.

*Types of Agencies Co-operating With the M. S. P. C. C.*

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children enlisted the assistance of 85 different agencies in caring for the 100 families studied intensively. Institutions offering shelter and temporary care were used in over two-thirds of these cases. (Table 12.) Disciplinary agencies, including the courts and probation officers, assisted in dealing with three-fourths of the families, indicating that State officials are already to some degree reaching the families of arrested parents. In an effort to make the homes suitable for the children, agencies offering aid and training in the home were enlisted in about one-half of the 100 cases.

*Actions Taken by the Court*

Almost twice as many court actions were reported for families in which the parents had been in prison as for those of widowers or those in which there had been divorce, separation or desertion.[1] These actions did not represent the complete court histories of the families, but only those actions which were brought under the cognizance and often with the assistance of the M. S. P. C. C. Actions for new control of the child were taken in one-half of the 500 cases studied. The right of the State to intervene for the protection of the children was exercised more frequently in dealing with arrested than with other neglectful parents, as it is obvious that such parents would be found least competent for the rearing of future citizens.

Court actions for discipline of the child occurred in only 7.6 per cent. of these families. Such actions included delinquency, waywardness and school offenses. (Table 13.) However, actions to establish new control for the better discipline of the child were considered necessary more frequently in this group than

[1] Court actions in widowers' families, 234; in families involving divorce, separation or desertion, 261; and of arrested parents, 445.

in the others studied, as the children of arrested parents had been exposed to many demoralizing influences.

Non-support was most frequent among the court actions for the discipline of the parents, and drunkenness, assault and battery and sex crimes came next in importance. In families of this type alcoholism and immorality are outstanding characteristics.

*Actions Taken in Caring for the Neglected Children of Arrested Parents*

A general understanding of the policies of the M. S. P. C. C. is necessary before considering the actions taken in handling these cases. That children can be cared for most effectively in family homes is a basic principle. Furthermore, his own home is considered the best place for a child, and he is only removed from a defective home after all efforts at reconstruction have failed. Institutional care is not advocated except for defectives and for children needing temporary shelter.

In accordance with the Society's policy, in 176 of the 500 cases the children were cared for in families. (Table 14.) In only 51 of these cases, however, was it possible to leave the children with their parents under supervision. The children in 33 families were removed until their own homes were reconstructed, and then were returned to their parents. This temporary removal was often a sufficient shock to the parents to make them realize their responsibility. One of these two methods was used in over two-fifths of the 100 cases more carefully studied. (Table 15.)

In about one-tenth of the 500 families, children were taken from their parents and placed with relatives. The more detailed study of 100 cases showed that in one-eighth of them children had been cared for in this way.

In the following instances treatment of this type was given:

*Case VIII.* The M—— family consisted of father, mother and one daughter five years of age. The mother, who had served both probation and prison terms for drunkenness, was finally committed to a hospital for the insane. The father placed the child at board, but soon lost track of her. He appealed to the M. S. P. C. C., who, after a long search, found the child and arranged to have her cared for by relatives.

*Case IX.* Of the seven children in the A—— family, the four oldest—three boys and a girl—were working and contributing to the family support. Two girls, twelve and thirteen, and a boy of six were in moral danger. Bad family conditions were

indicated by the fact that the father had been in court 24 times in nine years for assault and battery and drunkenness, and that it had been necessary to send one of the older sons to the Suffolk School. Since the family income was adequate and the mother was not degenerate, the children were left in the home and conditions were improved through supervision.

Forty-seven of the 500 cases were referred by the Society to the Division of Child Guardianship of the State Department of Public Welfare, whose agents placed the children in carefully selected boarding homes. Many of the 137 cases referred to the Home for Destitute Catholic Children were cared for in this way, since this institution only keeps the children until it is possible to place them in homes. (Table 14.)

*Case X.* Three dirty rooms containing but two beds were the home of a mother, a grown-up son who was a drunkard, and five children, all under ten years of age. The father was serving a sentence in the House of Correction for assault and battery, and the mother had just been released from probation for the same offense. She drank to excess and was reported to sell liquor on Sundays. Some years before, several children by her first husband had been taken away because of neglect. These five children were judged neglected by the court and sent to the Home for Destitute Catholic Children. Later they were placed in families.

Since the M. S. P. C. C. is doing case work, which means trying to care for each child in accordance with its individual needs, a large group of miscellaneous actions was reported. Thirty-six cases were supervised by other agencies after the first crises had been handled by the M. S. P. C. C., and in 22 instances it seemed wiser to transfer the cases immediately to other agencies more fitted for handling them. Destitution was relieved in 26 families through the assistance of the Overseers of the Poor. Very frequently the medical needs found in these 500 families were met by referring them to suitable dispensaries or hospitals.

No definite action was found to be possible in 53 of the 500 families having arrested parents. The reasons for this were varied, but included lack of evidence, unwarranted complaints and the disappearance of the families. There was less difficulty in obtaining evidence of neglect in the cases of families of criminal parents than in those of widowers or those broken by divorce, separation or desertion, since such parents were subject to more police supervision.

An estimate of the degree of success in the treatment of the 100 families intensively studied showed that the purpose of the

Society had been accomplished in one-third of the families, and that in almost one-half improvement had been secured. (Table 16.) A slightly greater number of failures was reported in the treatment of criminal families than in the other two types studied, indicating again the extreme difficulty in handling families of arrested parents.

*Summary*

Meager earnings, large families, defective mentality and moral degeneracy characterize families of arrested parents whose children have been neglected. These children do not suffer from cruel treatment, but they run the risk of not receiving adequate physical care, of getting irregular schooling and of being exposed to various forms of vice which lead to delinquency. The State aggravates these bad conditions by placing the parents in jail and leaving the unprotected children to struggle against the resulting destitution and social stigma. So far, the public has assumed but little responsibility for systematic efforts to safeguard children whose parents have been arrested. Private agencies have carried this work through its experimental stages, and demonstrated fully their need of special protection and guidance. A comprehensive plan for giving kindly and adequate protection to the children whose homes have been broken by arrest might well become a part of the activities by which the State seeks to care for its future citizens.

## CHAPTER III

# THE NEGLECTED CHILDREN OF FAMILIES BROKEN BY SEPARATION, DESERTION OR DIVORCE

### Summary of the Results of an Investigation

Made by Sophia C. Gleim

The hazards suffered by children in families broken by separation, desertion or divorce are evident from the fact that such families supplied one-fourth (24.8 per cent.) of the cases cared for between November 1, 1917, and November 1, 1918, by the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. In studying these cases two forms of analyses were used: (1) That made by the Society for its own purpose, and (2) a special form made in the course of this investigation. Five hundred of the former and one hundred of the latter supplied the data presented in this report. The cases analyzed by agents of the Society were taken from the files of 1916, 1917 and 1918, and came from all parts of Massachusetts; while the 100 cases studied intensively were those of broken families in or near Boston. No children whose parents had been separated for less than six months were included in the study. The periods when the children were under the supervision of the Society varied from six weeks to twelve years, but the usual period was one to two years.

*Characteristics of the Parents*

Over 60 per cent. of the parents in these families were Americans, the majority of whom gave varied evidence of their unfitness for producing and rearing future citizens. Half of them came from New England, and one in eight was a Canadian. (Table 1.) None of the non-English-speaking foreign groups was represented by as many as 5 per cent. of the cases. Does the loss of family virtues accompany and promote the decay of the native stock? Over half of the parents claiming religious affiliations were Protestant. (Table 2.) This proportion is greater than that of the groups of widowers or arrested parents, but is to be expected in families which are chiefly of New England stock. The Catholic Church did not prevent disregard of family ties by the 46 per cent. who claimed this as their religion.

The Jewish group was negligible, being represented by only 1 in 200. The families with parents of differing religions were not tabulated, but there was abundant evidence indicating that such differences may have been frequent sources of disagreement.

The summary of degenerate traits of these parents indicates that the situation of the mothers may have been worse than that of the fathers. A larger number of them were diseased or mentally defective. Thus in the group of 600 families there were 65 fathers and 127 mothers who had various forms of mental and physical defects. (Table 6-A.) The moral degredation of these unworthy parents is revealed more forcefully in the records of the 100 cases studied intensively. (Table 7.) Over half (51) of the mothers were reported as sexually immoral, and the 17 fathers charged with such lapses probably were only the more flagrant and easily detected offenders. Over two out of five (45) of the fathers were drunkards, and nearly as many (40) had deserted their families. Eleven mothers were feeble-minded or insane, and the same number of fathers had criminal records. The physical and mental defects of the mothers is apparent also in the analyses made by agents of the Society. (Table 6-A.) Their venereal diseases, feeble-mindedness, subnormal mentality and insanity seem more hopeless marks of degeneracy than the drunkenness and criminality of the fathers.

The sexual non-conformity of the mothers gave rise not only to desertion, separation or divorce, but also to the birth of numerous illegitimate children. Such children were found in 92, or over 15 per cent., of the 600 families studied, and when birth records of both parents and children were considered, the percentage rose to 22.3. (Table 9.) One hundred and thirty-four children, more than 7 per cent. of the total number, were born out of wedlock. Sixty-six families were found each with one illegitimate child, 14 each with two, and 12 each with three or more. One of the latter was a family of seven children, all of whom sprang from unlawful sexual intercourse. The illegitimacy rate in this group of broken families was over three times as great as that of the population at large, as the proportion of such births reported for Massachusetts in 1914 was 23 per 1,000 live births, while the rate for this group was 72 per 1,000 children.

The following cases will illustrate the social evils which result from the failure to give adequate supervision to these psychopathic or subnormal women:

*Case I.* The Society had under its care for one year the child of a woman who remarked to the physician that she had given

birth to "about ten" illegitimate children. She had met the father of this child during one of the periods of her husband's desertion. When the couple discovered that a child would be born from their unlawful cohabitation, they decided to live together and represent themselves as husband and wife. The lawful husband obtained a divorce and, through the intervention of agents of the M. S. P. C. C., the parents of the child were married. However, more stable personal ties did not promote a sense of family responsibility, as both parents wished to get rid of their child. The conduct of the mother suggests a psychopathic condition, although she appeared to be much superior to the father in education and mental ability.

*Case II.* Three illegitimate children were born during the period of less than four years when this couple was under the observation of the M. S. P. C. C. The father was feeble-minded and the mother's record was summed up in the terse expression, "rotten." Her appearance on the street clad in heavy mourning in anticipation of a grandmother's death was reported as an example of her peculiarities.

*Case III.* The sordid record of a feeble-minded, colored woman was revealed by investigations requested by an anonymous letter. The befogged state of her moral perceptions was evident when her confession that seven of her children were illegitimate was accompanied by the remark, "anybody will make mistakes," and by her assumption that she was entirely moral because she had refrained from street solicitation. She exclaimed, "If I had 60,000 children I would not permit one of them to be taken away from me!" Yet her children suffered from a lack of food, clothing, medical care and supervision. One five-months-old child was found dead in bed by the brother left in charge while the mother went to church. She claimed that her poor health explained the deaths of four rickety, tubercular infants. Finally the woman was sent to the State Reformatory.

*Economic Conditions*

The fluctuations in the personnel of these families made it difficult to discover just who was responsible for the support of their children. Both fathers and mothers showed a somewhat intermittent sense of family responsibility. Pressure from the Domestic Relations Court extracted more or less regular contributions from some absent fathers,[1] and about two out of five

[1] The M. S. P. C. C. instituted 41 court actions for non-support or desertion.

of the mothers attempted to earn money by the poorly-paid, unskilled work open to such women[1] rather than or in addition to the easier and more lucrative sex traffic.

These economic difficulties were met frequently by renting rooms to lodgers or by child labor. In one-third of the families, strangers or relatives were members of the household. Their presence tended to aggravate the immoral conditions. Thus there were frequent charges of immoral relations with mothers or daughters in the 37 households where there were unrelated male lodgers. Many of the children were at work, and the majority sought positions as soon as they reached the legal age of employment.

However, the bulk of the evidence indicates that bad moral conditions, rooted in the physical and nervous defects of the mothers, contributed more to the disrupting of these families than the economic incompetence of the fathers. At least half of those for whom occupations were reported (Table 3) claimed more or less skilled trades which may be expected to bring incomes sufficient to support families.

*Neglect of Children in Broken Families*

Of the three groups of children studied through the records of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, those found in the families broken by separation or divorce were most subject to physical cruelty. They were younger (Table 4, Chart IV) than the children of the widowers and arrested parents, and so had greater need for the protection and guidance given in good homes, but the personal traits which ruptured the ties between parents contributed to the cruel or abusive treatment of children, or promoted indifference to their physical and moral needs.

The analyses of conditions in these families made by agents of the M. S. P. C. C. show for each family the predominant or chief cause which made necessary intervention for the protection of the children, and state also other bad conditions which threatened their welfare. (Tables 9, 10 and 11, Chart V.) A tabulation of these reports reveals the three chief evils to which children in broken families are exposed: (1) Non-support, found in nearly three-fifths of the homes (58 per cent.) and predominant in about one-fourth (23 per cent.); (2) physical neglect,

[1] Among the 231 mothers who worked outside their homes there were 84 factory operatives, 38 domestics, 23 waitresses, 21 day workers or cleaners, 15 laundresses, 12 housekeepers, 6 hotel and restaurant employees, and a scattered list in miscellaneous occupations.

found in over half (54 per cent.) and predominant in one-fourth (27 per cent.) of the families; (3) contact with sexual immorality, found also in over half (55 per cent.) and predominant in one-fourth (25 per cent.) of the families. The two first factors interlock as, of course, non-support resulted in insufficient food, clothing and medical care. These broken families had an excess of physical as well as of moral uncleanliness. Intemperance and lack of supervision for the children were also common characteristics.

The sensitiveness of the Boston public to the needs of children is evident from the varied sources of the reports calling attention to the need of special efforts for the protection of the children in these families. (Table 8.) The alert agents of charitable and religious societies reported nearly a third of the cases, and relatives, neighbors or friends and the police, in the order named, came next in the frequency with which they appealed for special attention to the needs of these neglected children. However, nearly half had suffered from some form of serious injury before attention was called to the need of intervention.

*Treatment Given Broken Families With Neglected Children*

Discipline and training for the selfish and neglectful parents were the forms of treatment most needed in the broken families. Of the 261 court actions found necessary in dealing with 600 families, only 25 were for the discipline of the children. (Table 13.) The others were for the purpose of training or disciplining the parents, so that they would give better care to their children.

In many instances (133) reports of improved conditions justified the dropping of the cases, and in others (71) a more or less lengthy period of continuous supervision was found necessary. About half of the children were retained in or returned to their families and, whenever possible, foster homes were found with relatives. Less than two in five were placed in the homes of strangers or in institutions. (For details of treatment see Tables 13, 14 and 15.) On the whole, the rehabilitation of the natural family was accomplished in a larger proportion of cases than was possible in the families where the mothers had died or the parents were under arrest.

The task of bringing these parents to the point where they would put aside personal grievances and care for their children was often complex and difficult. As many as thirteen agencies

were enlisted in the treatment of one family, ten assisted with another, and the co-operation of seven or eight in the care of the children and discipline and training of their parents was not infrequent. A community less abundantly equipped with medical and social agencies than Boston would be unable to salvage so many sufferers from the wreckage of family life.

# CHAPTER IV

## COMBINED TABLES FOR STUDIES IN PART II

TABLE 1. BIRTHPLACES OF THE FATHERS AND MOTHERS OF CHILDREN FROM 1,600 FAMILIES CARED FOR BY THE MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN

| Country of birth | Total parents reported | | Number of parents of specified nativities found in families with: | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Widowered fathers 500 | | Arrested parents 500 | | Separated, divorced or deserting parents 600 | |
| | Number | Per cent. | Fathers | Mothers | Fathers | Mothers | Fathers | Mothers |
| Totals[1] | 2,176 | 100 | 336 | 278 | 369 | 392 | 385 | 416 |
| *United States* | 1,074 | 49.4 | 134 | 100 | 172 | 180 | 233 | 255 |
| Massachusetts | 701 | 32.2 | 78 | 73 | 118 | 128 | 150 | 154 |
| Other New England States | 202 | 9.3 | 24 | 12 | 31 | 36 | 39 | 60 |
| U. S. other than New England | 171 | 7.9 | 32 | 15 | 23 | 16 | 44 | 41 |
| *British Possessions* | 671 | 30.8 | 117 | 114 | 127 | 150 | 71 | 92 |
| Canada | 282 | 13 | 43 | 39 | 50 | 51 | 43 | 56 |
| England | 79 | 3.6 | 14 | 14 | 9 | 14 | 13 | 15 |
| Ireland | 295 | 13.6 | 58 | 57 | 66 | 82 | 14 | 18 |
| Scotland | 15 | .7 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| *Other Countries* | 431 | 19.8 | 85 | 64 | 70 | 62 | 81 | 69 |
| Armenia | 4 | .2 | 3 | 1 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Austria | 26 | 1.2 | .. | .. | 8 | 11 | 3 | 4 |
| Austria Hungary | 18 | .8 | 9 | 9 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Belgium | 5 | .2 | 2 | 3 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Finland | 8 | .4 | 4 | 4 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Germany | 17 | .8 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| Greece | 13 | .6 | 2 | 2 | .. | .. | 5 | 4 |
| Italy and Sicily | 114 | 5.2 | 31 | 23 | 12 | 9 | 23 | 16 |
| Poland | 32 | 1.5 | 4 | .. | 8 | 7 | 5 | 8 |
| Russia | 76 | 3.5 | 13 | 11 | 16 | 16 | 11 | 9 |
| Scandinavian countries | 51 | 2.3 | 11 | 9 | 14 | 10 | 4 | 3 |
| West Indies | 45 | 2.1 | .. | .. | 7 | 6 | 17 | 15 |
| All others[2] | 22 | 1.0 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 9 | 5 |

[1] Nativities were not reported for 1,024 parents.

[2] Of the fathers, the birthplace of 1 was Albania, 2 Armenia, 1 Australia, 2 Azores, 1 China, 3 Finland, 1 Greece, 3 Portugal.

Of the mothers, the birthplace of 1 was Albania, 1 Armenia, 1 Finland, 1 Greece, 1 India, 3 Portugal.

TABLE 2. RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS OF THE PARENTS IN 1,600 FAMILIES CARED FOR BY THE MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN

| Religious affiliations | Total parents reported | | Number of parents of specified religious affiliations found in families with: | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Widowered fathers 500 | | Arrested parents 500 | | Separated, divorced or deserting parents 600 | |
| | Number | Per cent. | Fathers | Mothers | Fathers | Mothers | Fathers | Mothers |
| Totals[1] | 2,713 | 100 | 454 | 402 | 433 | 455 | 477 | 492 |
| Catholic | 1,591 | 58.6 | 262 | 244 | 305 | 333 | 220 | 227 |
| Protestant | 1,092 | 40.3 | 184 | 150 | 126 | 120 | 252 | 260 |
| Jewish | 30 | 1.1 | 8 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 5 |

[1] Four hundred and eighty-six cases where religious affiliations were not stated, and 1 Mohammedan are not included in this table.

TABLE 3. OCCUPATIONS OF 1,600 FATHERS OF FAMILIES CARED FOR BY THE MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN

| Occupations | Total fathers | | Number of fathers engaged in specified occupations in families broken by: | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Per cent. | The mother's death | Arrests | Separations, divorces or desertions |
| Totals | 1,600 | 100 | 500 | 500 | 600 |
| *Agriculture, Forestry and Animal Husbandry* | 53 | 3.3 | 14 | 15 | 24 |
| Farmers, gardeners and lumbermen | 34 | 2.1 | 11 | 6 | 17 |
| Fishermen | 19 | 1.2 | 3 | 9 | 7 |
| *Manufacturing and Mechanical Industries* | 491 | 30.7 | 188 | 151 | 152 |
| Blacksmiths | 9 | .6 | 2 | 5 | 2 |
| Boiler makers and riveters | 5 | .3 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Brick and stone masons | 13 | .8 | 7 | 5 | 1 |
| Building workers | 12 | .8 | 4 | 8 | .. |
| Carpenters and cabinet makers | 59 | 3.7 | 21 | 20 | 18 |
| Electricians | 7 | .4 | .. | 3 | 4 |
| Engineers | 14 | .9 | .. | 6 | 8 |
| Factory operatives and mill hands | 201 | 12.6 | 80 | 66 | 55 |
| Foremen | 3 | .2 | 3 | .. | .. |
| Foundry and machine shop | 96 | 6.0 | 41 | 15 | 40 |
| Painters and paper hangers | 37 | 2.3 | 9 | 10 | 18 |
| Plumbers, gas and steam fitters | 8 | .5 | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| Printers | 6 | .4 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Tailors | 6 | .4 | 4 | .. | 2 |
| Not otherwise classified[1] | 15 | .9 | 10 | 5 | .. |
| *Transportation* | 191 | 11.9 | 71 | 65 | 55 |
| Draymen, motormen, teamsters and expressmen | 110 | 6.9 | 44 | 33 | 33 |
| Railroad workers | 32 | 2.0 | 12 | 12 | 8 |
| Automobile workers and chauffeurs | 21 | 1.3 | 4 | 5 | 12 |
| Longshoremen | 24 | 1.5 | 8 | 14 | 2 |
| Not otherwise classified[1] | 4 | .3 | 3 | 1 | .. |
| *Trade* | 48 | 3.0 | 13 | 19 | 16 |
| Meat cutter | 1 | .1 | .. | .. | 1 |
| Agents | 4 | .3 | .. | 2 | 2 |
| Clerks | 13 | .8 | 2 | 8 | 3 |
| Peddlers | 13 | .8 | 5 | 3 | 5 |
| Salesmen | 7 | .4 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Storekeepers | 8 | .5 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Jobbers | 1 | .1 | 1 | .. | .. |
| Horse dealer | 1 | .1 | .. | 1 | .. |

TABLE 3. (*Continued.*) OCCUPATIONS OF 1,600 FATHERS OF FAMILIES CARED FOR BY THE MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN

| Occupations | Total fathers | | Number of fathers engaged in specified occupations in families broken by: | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Per cent. | The mother's death | Arrests | Separations, divorces or desertions |
| *Public Service*[1] | 48 | 3.0 | 12 | 4 | 32 |
| *Professional Service*[1] | 15 | .9 | 5 | 2 | 8 |
| *Domestic and Personal Service* | 65 | 4.1 | 24 | 21 | 20 |
| Barbers | 14 | .9 | 6 | 2 | 6 |
| Bartenders | 2 | .1 | 2 | .. | .. |
| Cooks, chef and restaurant workers | 10 | .6 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| Elevator tenders | 5 | .3 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Janitors | 9 | .6 | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| Stablemen | 6 | .4 | 2 | 4 | .. |
| Waiters | 12 | .8 | 2 | 7 | 3 |
| Not otherwise classified[1] | 7 | .4 | 4 | .. | 3 |
| *Miscellaneous* | 229 | 14.3 | 90 | 86 | 53 |
| Extraction of minerals | 4 | .3 | 4 | .. | .. |
| Laborers | 211 | 13.2 | 78 | 85 | 48 |
| Watchmen | 5 | .3 | 5 | .. | .. |
| Not otherwise classified[1] | 9 | .6 | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| *Not reported* | 460 | 28.7 | 83 | 137 | 240 |

[1] The details of these groups may be obtained by applying to the Research Department of The Women's Educational and Industrial Union.

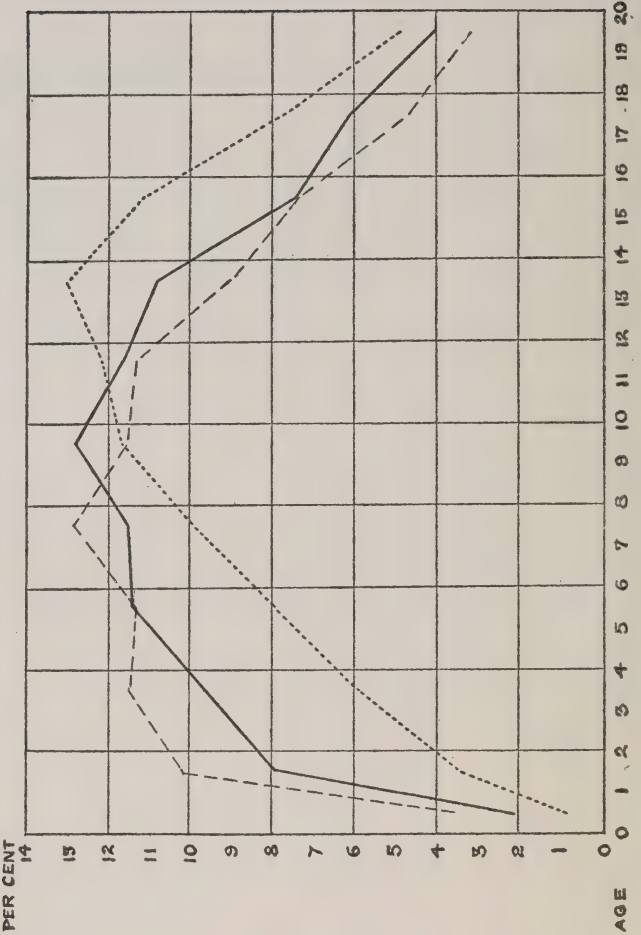


CHART IV. AGE DISTRIBUTION = 1600 M. S. P. C. C. CASE RECORDS.
PER CENT
14
13
12
11
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
0
AGE
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
ARRESTED PARENTS
BROKEN HOMES
WIDOWERS
DATA IS IN TABLE 4.

TABLE 4. AGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE CHILDREN IN 1,600 FAMILIES CARED FOR BY THE MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN

| Age[1] | Total children reported | | Number of children of specified ages found in families with: | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Widowered fathers 500 | | Arrested parents 500 | | Separated, divorced or deserting parents 600 | |
| | Number | Per cent. | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Totals[2] | 5,551 | 100 | 926 | 941 | 950 | 868 | 947 | 919 |
| Under one year | 119 | 2.1 | 6 | 9 | 23 | 15 | 34 | 32 |
| One to two years | 393 | 7.1 | 26 | 37 | 77 | 66 | 94 | 93 |
| Three to four years | 497 | 9.0 | 46 | 64 | 83 | 93 | 106 | 105 |
| Five to six years | 563 | 10.1 | 74 | 74 | 99 | 109 | 94 | 113 |
| Seven to eight years | 628 | 11.3 | 93 | 91 | 111 | 99 | 111 | 123 |
| Nine to ten years | 664 | 12.0 | 114 | 105 | 120 | 113 | 119 | 93 |
| Eleven to twelve years | 648 | 11.7 | 110 | 118 | 101 | 111 | 98 | 110 |
| Thirteen to fourteen years | 604 | 10.9 | 121 | 121 | 106 | 90 | 83 | 83 |
| Fifteen to sixteen years | 479 | 8.6 | 89 | 121 | 73 | 62 | 57 | 77 |
| Seventeen to eighteen years | 340 | 6.1 | 72 | 72 | 60 | 50 | 49 | 37 |
| Nineteen to twenty years | 223 | 4.0 | 57 | 35 | 48 | 25 | 32 | 26 |
| Twenty-one years and over | 264 | 4.8 | 72 | 62 | 39 | 26 | 38 | 27 |
| Age not reported | 129 | 2.3 | 46 | 32 | 10 | 9 | 32 | .. |

[1] The ages given are as a rule the ages of the children when the cases were closed.
[2] Eighty-two children are omitted from this table as no sex was given.

TABLE 5. CHILDREN FOUND[1] IN 1,600 FAMILIES CARED FOR BY THE MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN

| Children | Total | | Families having specified number of children: | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Per cent. | Widowered fathers | Arrested parents | Separated, divorced or deserting parents |
| Total families | 1,600 | 100 | 500 | 500 | 600 |
| One child | 245 | 15.3 | 69 | 63 | 113 |
| Two children | 331 | 20.7 | 85 | 102 | 144 |
| Three children | 291 | 18.2 | 89 | 84 | 118 |
| Four children | 280 | 17.5 | 84 | 101 | 95 |
| Five children | 192 | 12.0 | 82 | 53 | 57 |
| Six children | 130 | 8.1 | 48 | 47 | 35 |
| Seven children | 75 | 4.7 | 19 | 33 | 23 |
| Eight children | 28 | 1.8 | 8 | 10 | 10 |
| Nine children | 13 | .8 | 5 | 5 | 3 |
| Ten children or more | 13 | .8 | 11 | 1 | 1 |
| Number not reported | 2 | .1 | .. | 1 | 1 |

[1] This indicates in general the number of children living at home at the time the cases were reported, rather than the total number of children in the family.

TABLE 6-A. EVIDENCES OF DEGENERACY FOUND IN 1,600 FAMILIES CARED FOR BY THE MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN

*A—Parents*

| Degenerate condition reported | Total for 1,600 families | | | Number having specified degenerate condition in families with: Widowered fathers 500 | | Arrested parents 500 | | Separated, divorced or deserting parents 600 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Both parents | Fathers | Mothers | Fathers | Mothers | Fathers | Mothers | Fathers | Mothers |
| **Totals** | 3,670 | 2,209 | 1,461 | 532 | 155 | 1,216 | 901 | 461 | 405 |
| *Bad Physical Condition* | 211 | 68 | 143 | 18 | 60 | 20 | 40 | 30 | 43 |
| Crippled | 13 | 8 | 5 | 4 | .. | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| Gonorrhea | 15 | 4 | 11 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 5 |
| Syphilis | 33 | 9 | 24 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 3 | 11 |
| Tuberculosis | 86 | 22 | 64 | 3 | 45 | 6 | 7 | 13 | 12 |
| Other diseases | 64 | 25 | 39 | 7 | 10 | 7 | 16 | 11 | 13 |
| *Defective Nervous Endowment* | 274 | 93 | 181 | 25 | 17 | 33 | 80 | 35 | 84 |
| Epilepsy | 10 | 4 | 6 | 1 | .. | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| Feeble-mindedness[1] | 42 | 4 | 38 | 1 | 1 | .. | 21 | 3 | 16 |
| Insanity | 43 | 10 | 33 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 20 |
| Psycho-neurosis | 8 | 1 | 7 | 1 | .. | .. | 3 | .. | 4 |
| Subnormal | 171 | 74 | 97 | 20 | 9 | 31 | 46 | 23 | 42 |
| *Bad Personal Habits* | 1,510 | 945 | 565 | 304 | 49 | 400 | 349 | 241 | 167 |
| Alcoholism | 1,014 | 725 | 289 | 242 | 35 | 309 | 190 | 174 | 64 |
| Criminal tendencies | 83 | 66 | 17 | 14 | 1 | 43 | 13 | 9 | 3 |
| Immorality | 410 | 152 | 258 | 47 | 13 | 47 | 145 | 58 | 100 |
| Drug habit | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | .. | 1 | 1 | .. | .. |
| *Social Maladjustments* | 1,675 | 1,103 | 572 | 185 | 29 | 763 | 432 | 155 | 111 |
| Placed on probation | 530 | 314 | 216 | 57 | 8 | 181 | 129 | 76 | 79 |
| Prison term | 585 | 381 | 204 | 42 | 9 | 337 | 192 | 2 | 3 |
| Court record | 560 | 408 | 152 | 86 | 12 | 245 | 111 | 77 | 29 |

[1] The numbers given show those who were examined and found to be feeble-minded; others who were not examined may have been. This probably accounts for the smaller number of parents given as being feeble-minded.

TABLE 6-B. EVIDENCES OF DEGENERACY FOUND IN 1,600 FAMILIES CARED FOR BY THE MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN

*B—Children*

| Degenerate condition reported | Totals for 1,600 families | | | | Number having specified degenerate condition in families with: Widowered fathers 500 | | | Arrested parents 500 | | | Separated, divorced or deserting parents 600 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | All children | 1 child | 2 children | 3 or more children | 1 child | 2 children | 3 or more children | 1 child | 2 children | 3 or more children | 1 child | 2 children | 3 or more children |
| **Totals** | 749 | 594 | 101 | 54 | 194 | 39 | 13 | 220 | 35 | 30 | 180 | 27 | 11 |
| *Bad Physical Condition* | 172 | 156 | 14 | 2 | 51 | 5 | 1 | 62 | 2 | 1 | 43 | 7 | .. |
| Crippled | 21 | 20 | 1 | .. | 6 | .. | .. | 8 | .. | .. | 6 | 1 | .. |
| Gonorrhea | 21 | 18 | 3 | .. | 6 | 1 | .. | 5 | 1 | .. | 7 | 1 | .. |
| Syphilis | 16 | 14 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | .. | 7 | .. | 1 | 3 | .. | .. |
| Tuberculosis | 30 | 26 | 3 | 1 | 11 | 2 | 1 | 9 | .. | .. | 6 | 1 | .. |
| Other diseases | 84 | 78 | 6 | .. | 24 | 1 | .. | 33 | 1 | .. | 21 | 4 | .. |
| *Defective Nervous Endowment* | 177 | 154 | 17 | 6 | 46 | 7 | 1 | 52 | 6 | 3 | 56 | 4 | 2 |
| Epilepsy | 16 | 15 | 1 | .. | 4 | .. | .. | 2 | .. | .. | 9 | 1 | .. |
| Feeble-mindedness[1] | 90 | 75 | 10 | 5 | 19 | 5 | 1 | 33 | 3 | 3 | 23 | 2 | 1 |
| Insanity | 6 | 6 | .. | .. | 2 | .. | .. | 3 | .. | .. | 1 | .. | .. |
| Psycho-neurosis | 4 | 2 | 2 | .. | 1 | 2 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1 | .. | .. |
| Subnormal | 61 | 56 | 4 | 1 | 20 | .. | .. | 14 | 3 | .. | 22 | 1 | 1 |
| *Bad Personal Habits* | 148 | 128 | 17 | 3 | 47 | 10 | 1 | 39 | 1 | 2 | 42 | 6 | .. |
| Alcoholism | 16 | 16 | .. | .. | 6 | .. | .. | 6 | .. | .. | 4 | .. | .. |
| Criminal tendencies | 27 | 24 | 1 | 2 | 12 | 1 | 1 | 7 | .. | 1 | 5 | .. | .. |
| Immorality | 105 | 88 | 16 | 1 | 29 | 9 | .. | 26 | 1 | 1 | 33 | 6 | .. |
| *Social Maladjustments* | 252 | 156 | 53 | 43 | 50 | 17 | 10 | 67 | 26 | 24 | 39 | 10 | 9 |
| Placed on probation | 147 | 77 | 33 | 37 | 16 | 8 | 6 | 35 | 20 | 22 | 26 | 5 | 9 |
| Prison term | 39 | 31 | 6 | 2 | 13 | 1 | 1 | 12 | 5 | 1 | 6 | .. | .. |
| Court record[2] | 66 | 48 | 14 | 4 | 21 | 8 | 3 | 20 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 5 | .. |

[1] The numbers given show those who were examined and found to be feeble-minded; others who were not examined may have been.

[2] In a good many cases the court records of the children were merely "against children as neglected."

TABLE 7. CONDITIONS LYING BACK OF THE NEGLECT OF CHILDREN IN FAMILIES CARED FOR BY THE MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN

*(Based on 300 Case Records Studied Intensively)*

| Condition | Parents reported | | Families in which specified conditions were reported: Widowered fathers | Arrested parents | | Separated, divorced or deserting parents | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Per cent. | | Fathers | Mothers | Fathers | Mothers |
| Total number of parents | 500 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| *Degeneracy* | 441 | 88.2 | 60 | 84 | 125 | 74 | 98 |
| *Indicated by:* | | | | | | | |
| Feeble-mindedness | 10 | 2.0 | 1 | .. | 1 | .. | 8 |
| Insanity | 8 | 1.6 | 1 | 1 | 3 | .. | 3 |
| Poor stock | 22 | 4.4 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 3 |
| Subnormal mentality[1] | 13 | 2.6 | 2 | 3 | 7 | .. | 1 |
| Lack of responsibility | 6 | 1.2 | 6 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Sex immorality | 130 | 26.0 | 13 | 10 | 39 | 17 | 51 |
| Drunkenness | 227 | 45.4 | 32 | 60 | 63 | 45 | 27 |
| Other crimes | 25 | 5.0 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 11 | 5 |
| *Broken Family* | 509 | 101.8 | 8 | 95 | 97 | 156 | 153 |
| *Due to:* | | | | | | | |
| Desertion | 75 | 15.0 | 2 | 16 | 4 | 40 | 13 |
| Divorce | 38 | 7.6 | .. | 1 | 1 | 18 | 18 |
| Mother away at work | 47 | 9.4 | .. | .. | 20 | .. | 27 |
| Parent dead | 13 | 2.6 | .. | 10 | 2 | 1 | .. |
| Parent in jail | 137 | 27.4 | 1 | 65 | 67 | 1 | 3 |
| Step-parent | 17 | 3.4 | 5 | .. | .. | 8 | 4 |
| Separation | 162 | 32.4 | .. | 3 | 3 | 78 | 78 |
| Quarreling | 20 | 4.0 | .. | .. | .. | 10 | 10 |
| *Miscellaneous* | 13 | 2.6 | 2 | .. | .. | 7 | 4 |

[1] Subnormal mentality was checked when the parent showed indications of feeble-mindedness or insanity, but when no examination had been made.

TABLE 8. MEANS BY WHICH THE NEGLECT OF THE CHILDREN OF 300 FAMILIES HAD BEEN REPORTED TO THE MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN

| Means of assistance | Total for 300 families | Number of times in which the specified means of assistance were utilized for the benefit of families with: | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Widowered fathers | Arrested parents | Separated, divorced or deserting parents |
| | Number | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| *Public Agencies* | 123 | 38 | 62 | 23 |
| Overseer of Poor or State Board of Charity | 14 | 5 | 8 | 1 |
| Police | 65 | 13 | 38 | 14 |
| Probation or parole officer | 18 | 4 | 10 | 4 |
| *Public School Officials* | 26 | 16 | 6 | 4 |
| Attendance officer | 11 | 7 | 2 | 2 |
| Nurse | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Teacher | 8 | 5 | 3 | .. |
| Not otherwise classified[1] | 3 | 2 | .. | 1 |
| *Charitable or Religious Agencies* | 89 | 30 | 29 | 30 |
| *Relatives* | 49 | 17 | 12 | 20 |
| Father | 7 | .. | 5 | 2 |
| Mother | 11 | .. | 2 | 9 |
| Other relatives | 31 | 17 | 5 | 9 |
| *Neighbors and friends* | 42 | 7 | 20 | 15 |
| *Anonymous* | 16 | 5 | 2 | 9 |
| *Not Otherwise Classified*[2] | 6 | 3 | .. | 3 |

[1] Includes 1 superintendent of schools, 1 official at the Placement Bureau, and 1 principal.
[2] Includes 1 lawyer, The Lowney Co-operative Association, Commission on Training Camp Activities, 2 physicians and 1 daily newspaper.

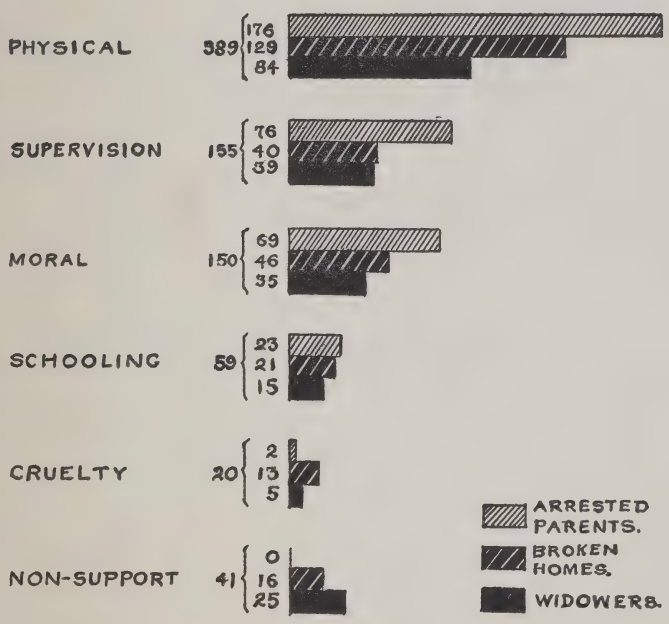
TABLE 9. CONDITIONS WHICH MADE SPECIAL CARE OF CHILDREN NECESSARY IN 1,600 FAMILIES CARED FOR BY THE MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN

| Injurious condition | Total for 1,600 families | | Number of times in which specified conditions were reported in families with: | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Per cent. | Widowered fathers 500 | Arrested parents 500 | Separated, divorced or deserting parents 600 |
| Total reports | 6,280 | 100 | 1,715 | 2,087 | 2,478 |
| *Improper Treatment of Children* | 2,447 | 39.0 | 627 | 903 | 917 |
| Physical neglect | 1,006 | 16.0 | 300 | 383 | 323 |
| Moral neglect | 455 | 7.2 | 92 | 170 | 193 |
| Non-support | 845 | 13.5 | 187 | 312 | 346 |
| Physical cruelty | 141 | 2.2 | 48 | 38 | 55 |
| *Low Social Standards in the Family* | 2,341 | 37.3 | 556 | 923 | 862 |
| *Indicated by:* | | | | | |
| Intemperance | 964 | 15.4 | 280 | 423 | 261 |
| Immorality (usually sexual) | 686 | 10.9 | 121 | 244 | 321 |
| Juvenile delinquency | 282 | 4.5 | 93 | 87 | 102 |
| Illegitimacy | 282 | 4.5 | 38 | 110 | 134 |
| Feeble-mindedness | 127 | 2.0 | 24 | 59 | 44 |
| *Abnormal Family Group* | 1,492 | 23.8 | 532 | 261 | 699 |
| *Due to:* | | | | | |
| Divorce | 155 | 2.5 | 14 | 22 | 119 |
| Separation | 657 | 10.5 | .. | 157 | 500 |
| Widowhood | 54 | .9 | .. | 41 | 13 |
| Widowerhood | 513 | 8.2 | 500 | 11 | 2 |
| Presence of lodgers | 113 | 1.8 | 18 | 30 | 65 |

TABLE 10. PREDOMINANT FACTORS FOUND BY AGENTS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN INDICATING THE NEED OF INTERVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE CHILDREN IN THE 1,600 FAMILIES STUDIED

| Factor showing need | Total for 16,000 families | | Number in which the specified factors showing need of intervention were found in families with: | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Per cent. | Widowered fathers 500 | Arrested parents 500 | Separated, divorced or deserting parents 600 |
| Total factors | 1,691 | 100 | 527 | 540 | 624 |
| *Improper Treatment of the Children* | 919 | 54.3 | 298 | 277 | 344 |
| Physical neglect | 484 | 28.6 | 165 | 156 | 163 |
| Physical cruelty | 40 | 2.4 | 23 | 8 | 9 |
| Medical neglect | 58 | 3.4 | 24 | 11 | 23 |
| Non-support | 310 | 18.3 | 78 | 94 | 138 |
| Neglect to support in marriage | 294 | 17.4 | 73 | 86 | 135 |
| Neglect to support illegitimate children | 16 | .9 | 5 | 8 | 3 |
| Neglect to provide necessary special care | 27 | 1.6 | 8 | 8 | 11 |
| *Low Social Standards* | 426 | 25.2 | 86 | 141 | 199 |
| *Indicated by:* | | | | | |
| Juvenile delinquency | 49 | 2.9 | 16 | 8 | 25 |
| Neglect of moral standards other than sex | 85 | 5.0 | 13 | 45 | 27 |
| Neglect of sex standards | 292 | 17.3 | 57 | 88 | 147 |
| *Not falling under any of above* | 346 | 20.5 | 143 | 122 | 81 |

CHART V. FORMS OF NEGLECT — 300 CASE RECORDS OF THE M. S. P. C. C.




COMPLETE DATA IS IN TABLE II.

TABLE 11. FORMS OF NEGLECT OF CHILDREN DISCOVERED BY THE AGENTS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN

*(Based on 300 Case Records Studied Intensively)*

| Form of neglect | Total for 300 families | | Reports of specified forms of neglect in families with: | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Per cent. | Widowered fathers 100 | Arrested parents 100 | Separated, divorced or deserting parents 100 |
| Total forms of neglect | 814 | 100 | 203 | 346 | 265 |
| *Physical Neglect* | 389 | 47.8 | 84 | 176 | 129 |
| *Due to lack of:* | | | | | |
| Clothing | 102 | 12.5 | 20 | 44 | 38 |
| Food | 118 | 14.5 | 25 | 47 | 46 |
| Shelter | 69 | 8.5 | 17 | 48 | 4 |
| Medical care | 45 | 5.5 | 15 | 15 | 15 |
| Cleanliness | 55 | 6.8 | 7 | 22 | 26 |
| *Physical Cruelty or Abuse* | 20 | 2.5 | 5 | 2 | 13 |
| *Moral Neglect* (contact with vice) | 150 | 18.4 | 35 | 69 | 46 |
| *Neglect of Schooling* | 59 | 7.2 | 15 | 23 | 21 |
| *Absence of Supervision* | 155 | 19.0 | 39 | 76 | 40 |
| *Non-support* | 41 | 5.0 | 25 | .. | 16 |
| *No Neglect Found* | 14 | .. | 14 | .. | .. |

TABLE 12. TYPES OF AGENCIES[1] ENLISTED BY THE MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN IN DEALING WITH FAMILIES OF NEGLECTED CHILDREN

*(Based on 300 Case Records Studied Intensively)*

| Types of agencies | Total for 300 families | | Number of times specified agencies were enlisted in families broken by: | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Per cent. | Widowered fathers 100 | Arrested parents 100 | Separated, divorced or deserting parents 100 |
| Total agencies | 685 | 100 | 153 | 290 | 242 |
| Home finding and child placing | 106 | 15.5 | 27 | 29 | 50 |
| Reforming and rescuing | 14 | 2.0 | 4 | 6 | 4 |
| Disciplinary | 175 | 25.5 | 45 | 75 | 55 |
| Aid and training in the home | 110 | 16.1 | 24 | 47 | 39 |
| Care of health | 113 | 16.5 | 22 | 42 | 49 |
| Protective agencies other than the M. S. P. C. C. | 15 | 2.2 | 2 | 4 | 9 |
| Educational | 29 | 4.2 | 4 | 17 | 8 |
| Miscellaneous | 11 | 1.6 | 2 | 2 | 7 |
| Shelter and temporary care | 110 | 16.1 | 21 | 68 | 21 |
| Guardianship | 2 | .3 | 2 | .. | .. |

[1] The M. S. P. C. C. handled the cases without enlisting any other agency in 30 families of widowers and in 6 families of separated, divorced or deserting parents.

TABLE 13. COURT ACTIONS INSTITUTED WHILE 1,600 FAMILIES WERE UNDER THE CARE OF THE MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN

| Action | Total for 1,600 families | | Number of specified actions taken in families of: | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Per cent. | Widowered fathers—500 | Arrested parents—500 | Separated, divorced or deserting parents—600 |
| Totals | 940 | 100 | 234 | 445 | 261 |
| *Change of Status of Child as Against Parent* | 627 | 66.7 | 182 | 288 | 157 |
| New control for better care of child. | 530 | 56.4 | 148 | 250 | 132 |
| Against children as neglected | 377 | 40.1 | 104 | 189 | 84 |
| Against parents for neglect | 96 | 10.2 | 18 | 43 | 35 |
| Guardianship | 52 | 5.5 | 23 | 17 | 12 |
| Adoption | 5 | .5 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| New control for discipline of child | 97 | 10.3 | 34 | 38 | 25 |
| Juvenile delinquency | 69 | 7.3 | 22 | 31 | 16 |
| Waywardness | 21 | 2.2 | 9 | 6 | 6 |
| School offense | 6 | .6 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Larceny | 1 | .1 | 1 | .. | .. |
| *Discipline of Parents* | 313 | 33.3 | 52 | 157 | 104 |
| *Because of:* | | | | | |
| Non-support of family | 105 | 11.2 | 20 | 55 | 30 |
| Drunkenness | 56 | 6.0 | 9 | 43 | 4 |
| Assault | 16 | 1.7 | 3 | 12 | 1 |
| Rape | 7 | .7 | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| Incest | 6 | .6 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| Adultery | 4 | .4 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Bigamy | 1 | .1 | .. | .. | 1 |
| Illegal cohabitation | 18 | 1.9 | 3 | 8 | 7 |
| Other immoral acts | 34 | 3.6 | 2 | 18 | 14 |
| Non-support of illegitimate children | 11 | 1.2 | 3 | 2 | 6 |
| Desertion | 8 | .9 | .. | 3 | 5 |
| Larceny | 4 | .4 | .. | 2 | 2 |
| Liquor selling | 5 | .5 | .. | 2 | 3 |
| Disorderly conduct | 6 | .6 | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| Continuance by court | 14 | 1.5 | .. | .. | 14 |
| Not otherwise classified | 18 | 1.9 | 1 | 4 | 13 |

TABLE 14. ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE M. S. P. C. C.—1,600 FAMILIES

| Action | 1,600 families | | Actions taken for | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Per cent. | Widowered fathers—500 | Arrested parents—500 | Separated, divorced or deserting parents—600 |
| Totals | 1,771 | 100 | 517 | 635 | 619 |
| *Children Cared for in Families* | 436 | 24.6 | 126 | 176 | 134 |
| Remained with their parents | 95 | 5.4 | 18 | 51 | 26 |
| Temporarily withdrawn and returned to parents | 64 | 3.6 | 9 | 33 | 22 |
| Placed in homes of relatives | 145 | 8.2 | 59 | 45 | 41 |
| Placed in homes of strangers | 21 | 1.2 | 15 | .. | 6 |
| Placed by public agencies | | | | | |
| State Board of Charity | 104 | 5.9 | 23 | 43 | 38 |
| Trustees for Children | 7 | .4 | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| *Children Cared for in Institutions* | 277 | 15.6 | 68 | 156 | 53 |
| Temporary custodial care | 222 | 12.5 | 54 | 137 | 31 |
| Home, Destitute Catholic Children | 212 | 12.0 | 46 | 137 | 29 |
| Catholic Home at Brightside | 3 | .2 | 3 | .. | .. |
| Camp for Crippled Children | 1 | .05 | .. | .. | 1 |
| Deaconness Home | 1 | .05 | .. | .. | 1 |
| Daily Industrial School | 3 | .2 | 3 | .. | .. |
| Working Boy's Home | 1 | .05 | 1 | .. | .. |
| Ingleside Corporation | 1 | .05 | 1 | .. | .. |
| State Schools for Defectives | 19 | 1.1 | 4 | 9 | 6 |
| School for Feeble-minded | 17 | 1.0 | 4 | 8 | 5 |
| School for Deaf | 2 | .1 | .. | 1 | 1 |
| Reformatory | 36 | 2.0 | 10 | 10 | 16 |
| County Training School | 9 | .5 | 2 | 1 | 6 |
| State Industrial School | 19 | 1.1 | 1 | 9 | 9 |
| House of Good Shepherd | 8 | .5 | 7 | .. | 1 |
| *Miscellaneous Actions* (children in families or in institutions) | 806 | 45.5 | 244 | 250 | 312 |
| Supervision by M. S. P. C. C. | 94 | 5.3 | 19 | 45 | 30 |
| Supervision by other agencies | 105 | 5.9 | 28 | 36 | 41 |
| Sent to other private organizations | 110 | 6.3 | 45 | 22 | 43 |
| Assistance by Overseers of Poor | 56 | 3.2 | 7 | 26 | 23 |
| Medical needs met | 80 | 4.5 | 22 | 31 | 27 |
| Military or State aid given | 3 | .2 | 1 | .. | 2 |
| Massachusetts Hospital School | 3 | .2 | 3 | .. | .. |
| Cases dropped after improvement | 320 | 18.1 | 97 | 90 | 133 |
| Cases continued | 35 | 2.0 | 22 | .. | 13 |
| *No Specific Action Taken* | 252 | 14.2 | 79 | 53 | 120 |
| Evidence not obtainable | 97 | 5.5 | 25 | 24 | 48 |
| Complaint unwarranted | 54 | 3.1 | 21 | 6 | 27 |
| Family disappeared | 57 | 3.2 | 12 | 15 | 30 |
| No action possible or necessary | 43 | 2.4 | 21 | 7 | 15 |
| Removed to another state | 1 | .05 | .. | 1 | .. |

TABLE 15. FINAL DISPOSITION OF THE CHILDREN IN FAMILIES CARED FOR BY THE MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN

*(Based on 300 Case Records Studied Intensively)*

| Final disposition | Total for 300 cases | | Number of specified final dispositions of the children in families of: | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Per cent. | Widowered fathers 100 | Arrested parents 100 | Separated, divorced or deserting parents 100 |
| Totals | 376[1] | 100 | 126 | 125 | 125 |
| *Child left with or returned to parents*[2] | 143 | 38.0 | 41 | 43 | 59 |
| *Child removed to home of other relatives* | 58 | 15.4 | 29 | 12 | 17 |
| *Child Cared for by Strangers* | 175 | 46.5 | 56 | 70 | 49 |
| *In:* | | | | | |
| Boarding home | 64 | 17.0 | 31 | 11 | 22 |
| Free home | 10 | 2.7 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Adopted home | 7 | 1.9 | 2 | 5 | .. |
| Institution[3] | 94 | 25.0 | 21 | 49 | 24 |

[1] In 76 families more than one child was cared for.

[2] Conditions in the family were improved as follows: In 56 families by discipline; 38 by instruction; 2 by warnings; 7 by placing housekeepers in homes; 2 by placing relatives in homes; and 19 by economic relief. Data were not given for 19 families.

[3] Often for temporary custodial care; children later placed in families.

TABLE 16. ESTIMATES OF SUCCESS IN TREATMENT OF FAMILIES CARED FOR BY THE MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN

*(Based on 300 Case Records Studied Intensively)*

| Estimate of success | Total families | | Number of specified treatments in families in which there were: | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Per cent. | Widowered fathers | Arrested parents | Separated, divorced or deserting parents |
| Totals | 300 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Purpose accomplished | 108 | 36.0 | 33 | 33 | 42 |
| Improvement | 111 | 37.0 | 28 | 46 | 37 |
| Failure because plans were blocked or did not work | 32 | 10.6 | 8 | 14 | 10 |
| Case transferred to other agency | 31 | 10.3 | 14 | 7 | 10 |
| No action[1] | 18 | 6.0 | 17 | .. | 1 |

[1] In five of these cases the complaint was unwarranted, in four cases the evidence was not obtainable, and in one action was stopped by the tragic death of the mother and child. Various other reasons accounted for the lack of action in the remaining cases.

PART III

# PUBLIC INTERVENTION IN MASSACHUSETTS FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN IN NEED OF SPECIAL CARE

BY BERTHA HILLS STYLES, A GRADUATE STUDENT OF SIMMONS COLLEGE, WHO WAS HOLDING A FELLOWSHIP IN THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF THE WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL AND INDUSTRIAL UNION

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
1919-1920

# PUBLIC INTERVENTION IN MASSACHUSETTS FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN IN NEED OF SPECIAL CARE

By Bertha Hills Styles

A knowledge of Massachusetts statutes enacted for the protection of children and of their interpretation by the courts is required in order to understand fully the case records on which these reports are based. While Massachusetts falls short in several respects of providing ideal protection for all youthful citizens, she is, in many ways, in advance of other states in her activities for the safeguarding of children in danger of neglect. (Chart I, frontispiece.)

We may consider first what means Massachusetts has adopted to protect the child from parental neglect and abandonment and to provide for the child a normal home environment. Massachusetts is particularly well equipped with statutes supplementing the common law and defining more clearly the powers of the State to remove children from undesirable homes. When a complaint is made that any child under sixteen years of age within the jurisdiction of a police, district or municipal court "by reason of orphanage or of neglect, crime, cruelty, insanity or drunkenness, or other vice of its parents, is growing up without education or without salutary control, or without proper physical care, or in circumstances exposing him to lead an idle and dissolute life, or is dependent upon public charity," a precept may be issued to bring the child before the court.[1] At the same time a notice and summons are sent to the Division of Child Guardianship of the Department of Public Welfare, and a summons is issued to at least one of the parents of the child, or in case no parent is found, to its guardian, requiring the legal guardian of the child and a member of the Department to appear before the court and to show just cause why the child should not be committed to the State Division of Child Guardianship or be otherwise provided for. If at the hearing the allegations in the complaint are found to be true, the complaint may be continued and the child placed in the care of some suitable person or charitable society or he may be committed to the Division of Child Guardianship until he becomes twenty-one years of age

[1] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1909, Chap. 81, Sec. 1.

or until the object of his commitment has been accomplished.[1] An appeal from the order of the lower court may be made to the superior court for civil business and the child placed in the care of a suitable person or agency pending the determination of the appeal.[2]

Moreover, a criminal action may be brought in the lower court against the parent or guardian of a child who could be taken away on the ground of neglect and, in case of conviction, a severe penalty may be imposed.[3] In a large number of cases, however, the parent is put on probation. This method of disposing of these cases allows the court through its probation officers to maintain constant supervision over the family life and to assist in its rehabilitation. No leniency, however, is shown the parent who abandons his child. This crime is severely punished in Massachusetts by imprisonment for two to five years, while an accomplice who knowingly assists in abandoning the child may be fined not more than $100 or suffer similar imprisonment.[4] In many cases a neglected child may be removed from the control of its parents through a civil procedure in the probate court. A petition for guardianship may be filed in probate and notice served on the parent or guardian to appear at court at the time set for the hearing.[5]

Our ideas, however, of what constitutes a neglected child are by no means clear. A "neglect" case rarely goes beyond the court of original jurisdiction and consequently we find almost no definitions of the higher courts of what constitutes neglect. As a general rule, however, the lower courts will not prosecute a parent nor threaten to remove his child because the parent has failed to secure for his child physical care above the average standards of the community in which he lives.[6] On the other hand, the court is quick to admit evidence of moral neglect which is exposing the child "to lead an idle and dissolute life."[7] It must not be supposed, however, that court proceedings need al-

[1] Revised Laws, Massachusetts, 1902, Chap. 83, Sec. 3. Parents have no inherent property right in their minor children of which they can in no way be deprived without their consent, and though they are the natural guardians of their children, and entitled to their custody, with the right to appropriate their earnings, and may recover damages for any interference with their rights by a wrongdoer, this right is not an absolute and uncontrollable one, and will not be enforced to the detriment or destruction of the happiness and well-being of the child. *Purinton* v. *Jamrock* (1907), 195 Mass. 187.

[2] Supra, p. 6.

[3] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1911, Chap. 456, Sec. 1.

[4] Revised Laws, Massachusetts, 1902, Chap. 83, Sec. 11.

[5] The Revised Laws, Massachusetts, 1907, Chap. 145, Sec. 1.

[6] Baker, Hon. Harvey H. "What Constitutes a Neglected Child Under the Massachusetts Statutes," p. 4.

[7] Ibid., p. 5.

ways result in even a temporary separation of the child from its parents. The court recognizes that the child living with his natural parents has the most nearly normal life and for that reason the parents are in many instances allowed to take the child home on trial before any separation occurs. In other cases the children are returned after a temporary separation, during which the family has been able to rehabilitate itself. If it seems probable that the proper adjustment can be made without removing the child from the home, the appearance of the child in court is often avoided by proceeding against the parent for neglect.[1] The court, moreover, may well keep a neglect case open until the family has shown that it no longer needs public supervision.[2]

As early as 1880 Massachusetts embodied in a statute the belief that a private home provided the atmosphere most conducive to the welfare of a child and at that time adopted the placing-out system for its wards.[3] It has continued to follow this policy to the present day and in addition keeps constant supervision over all homes in which children are placed. Every boarding home for children is required to secure an annual license which regulates the sanitary conditions and the number of children to be boarded on the premises at one time. Regular inspection is maintained and severe penalties are imposed for violating the terms of the license.[4]

Requests are frequently received from persons who wish to adopt a child deprived for one reason or another of his natural parents. Such a transfer of the permanent control of a child from one person to another is open to grave abuses and it is to protect both the child and his parents from a hasty and ill-considered adoption that statutory provision has been made to regulate this procedure.[5] A petition to adopt any child must be filed in probate court and the consent of both parents or guardian and of the child himself, if he is more than fourteen years of age, is required.[6] A parent forfeits his rights, however, if he is insane, or if he has wilfully deserted and neglected his child for two years preceding the date of the petition, or if he has been convicted of lewd conduct, or of drunkenness three times within one

[1] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1916, Chap. 243.

[2] Ibid., p. 6.

[3] Richardson, Anne B. "The Massachusetts System of Caring for State Minor Wards." Report of Committee on History of Child Saving Work, Twentieth National Conference of Charities and Correction, Chicago, 1893, pp. 54-67.

[4] Revised Laws, Massachusetts, 1902, Chap. 83, Secs. 1-8.

[5] Revised Laws, Massachusetts, 1902, Chap. 154, Sec. 1.

[6] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1904, Chap. 302, Sec. 1.

year.[1] It is necessary to publish the petition in newspapers for three successive weeks, and the hearing of the petition in court must be open to the public.[2]

The child of divorced parents, however, receives no such careful attention when as a result of divorce he is deprived of a normal home life and placed by order of the court in the custody of but one of his parents. It is true that the law requires that the welfare of the child shall be the determining factor in his disposal in a divorce decree[3] and that upon the petition of either parents[4] thereafter the custody of the child may be changed as the circumstances of the parents and the benefit of the child may require.[5] However well the intent of this provision may be realized in the average divorce case, the very nature of the uncontested divorce prevents any discussion of the disposal of the child and deprives him at the outset of whatever meager protection this provision may afford in a contested divorce.[6] Although some time may elapse before Massachusetts will provide continuous supervision for all children of divorced parents, the function of the divorce proctor[7] in default cases should immediately be extended to protect the children involved in such cases from the almost inevitable evil attending them.

*An Adequate Income for the Family with Children*

No one will deny that a home life suitable for children cannot be provided without an adequate income for the family.[8] No state government at the present time guarantees to any family the receipt of such an income, but it has long recognized the right of the child to the support and care of its parents. At common law there is no legal obligation resting on the parent to support the child, but statutory provisions compelling the parent to support his offspring are now almost universal in this country. Massachusetts in the uniform desertion act of 1911[9] has attempted

[1] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1907, Chap. 405, Sec. 1.

[2] Revised Laws, Massachusetts, 1902, Chap. 154, Secs. 5-6.

[3] Supra, p. 3.

[4] Or of a next friend. Mass. Gen. Law, 1921, Chap. 208, Sec. 28.

[5] Revised Laws, Massachusetts, 1902, Chap. 152, Sec. 25.

[6] Carstens, C. C. (Unpublished lecture at Conference of Research Department, Women's Educational and Industrial Union, March 8, 1920.)

[7] The proctor is an attorney who intervenes in divorce cases under any assignment from the court to protect the interests of the State. Few states in this country provide for such proctors. Smith, Reginald H., "Justice and the Poor," Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Bulletin No. 13 (1919), pp. 102-103.

[8] "Standards of Child Welfare." Children's Bureau Publication No. 60 (1919), p. 440.

[9] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1911, Chap. 456.

by criminal proceedings to enforce the State's interest in the support of the family and at the same time to provide directly for neglected wives and children.[1] Under this act any husband may be punished by a fine not exceeding $200 or by imprisonment for not more than one year, or by both fine and imprisonment if he deserts his wife or minor children without just cause and leaves them without making provision for their support, or if he wilfully allows his children to become neglected.[2] The fine imposed may be paid to the probation officer for the support of the family.[3] The maintenance of the wife and children pending trial is often provided for by a temporary order for support.[4] The framers of this measure realizing that imprisonment with a payment of but fifty cents each day might serve only to aggravate a situation already serious, provided that the deserting husband might be put on probation and made to pay a certain sum to the probation officer from time to time for the support of his family.[5] Prompt action under this statute against a deserting father and subsequent supervision of the family by the probation officer provide preventive as well as punitive measures for the protection of the children.

Many children, however, are deprived of an adequate income through no misdeed of their parents, but solely on account of the death or disability of the natural breadwinners. The belief that a home life and a mother's care are of inestimable value in the rearing of a child is now widespread and has resulted in legislation providing for the payment of "outdoor relief" to needy families deprived of support by the death or disability of the husbands. Massachusetts early joined the pioneer states in establishing a mother's aid law and since 1913 has been providing this form of relief.[6] Any mother with dependent children under fourteen years may receive aid from the State, although the unmarried mother of an illegitimate child is in practice deprived of state support. The mother applies to the overseers of the poor of the town in which she lives and they in turn determine both the fitness of the mother and the need for public relief to assist her in this work.[7] The Department of Public Welfare has extensive supervisory powers and may determine the policies

[1] Knowlton, C. J., in *Commonwealth* v. *Acker* (1908), 197 Mass. 191, 193.
[2] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1911, Chap. 456, Sec. 1.
[3] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1911, Chap. 456, Sec. 2.
[4] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1911, Chap. 456, Sec. 4.
[5] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1911, Chap. 456, Sec. 5.
[6] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1913, Chap. 763.
[7] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1913, Chap. 763, Sec. 2.

relating to mothers' aid.[1] The Commonwealth reimburses the town in which the mother receives relief for one-third of the amount given, and if the mother has no settlement the town is reimbursed for the total amount of the aid.[2] The amount of the aid is based upon a family budget and varies with the needs and size of the family and with the prevailing cost of living. The law specifically states that the receipt of mothers' aid does not pauperize the recipients, but Massachusetts does insist that each family who applies for aid shall be in need and thereby fails to recognize the inherent right of the dependent mother to public assistance in the rearing of her children.[3]

*The Special Court for Children*

There is, however, a large body of children whose protective care has not sufficed to prevent them from committing an offense against the State. Public opinion has long recognized that society is in large measure responsible for the early delinquency of its children and has, therefore, sought means to protect the unfortunate child from the unwholesome contact with court procedure. Although Massachusetts was one of the first states to provide for the hearing of children's cases apart from those of adults, Illinois first passed a specific state law authorizing the establishment of a special court for the disposition of children's cases. Since 1906, however, Massachusetts has provided by law for juvenile courts for children under seventeen years of age.[4] This act provides for the treatment of a child not as a criminal, but as a young person in need of aid and guidance. Although the juvenile session is a part of the criminal court, the traditional forbidding aspects of a criminal trial are eliminated by informality of procedure, by the use of the summons instead of a warrant, and by having the parties to a case discuss the entire matter in a friendly fashion devoid of technicalities. When a child less than fourteen years old has been committed under this act he may not be held for trial in a lock-up, but must be put in charge of a probation officer or of the Division of Child Guardianship. Meanwhile the probation officer is sent to investigate the home and to determine what social factors have been influential in causing the delinquency of the child. A summons

[1] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1913, Chap. 763, Sec. 5.

[2] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1913, Chap. 763, Sec. 6.

[3] The Danish law specifically states that every mother of a child under 14 years, whose property is less than a certain amount, is entitled to a public grant.

[4] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1906, Chap. 413.

is issued to the parent to appear at court at the time set for the trial and to show cause why the child should not be declared delinquent. If the child is declared to be wayward[1] rather than delinquent he must be placed in care of the probation officer, but if he is found to be delinquent he may be committed to the care of the State Division of Child Guardianship instead of being placed on probation.[2]

The belief that a knowledge of the social and economic conditions is indispensable to the adequate treatment of each case has resulted in the appointment of the probation officer to investigate the home environment of each child.[3] The examination of each child by an expert psychologist and physician and the consideration of his diagnosis by the judge as evidence, is an even more recent development of the attempt on the part of the State to discover the exact cause of delinquency in the child and to provide the proper method of correcting the defect. Although the Judge Baker Foundation has amply demonstrated the need for public officials to examine the juvenile delinquent, no such agents have been appointed in Massachusetts courts to assume this responsibility.[4]

The problem of the juvenile delinquent and of the neglected child is often in large measure a family rather than an individual problem and involves in many instances the prosecution of the parents through the lower criminal court or a petition for guardianship in the probate court. A single case, therefore, may present angles which require the services of both civil and criminal courts and of different judges, with a consequent duplication of effort, waste of time,[5] and a lack of thorough understanding of the problem. To obviate these difficulties domestic relations or family courts have been created which have jurisdiction over all problems of the family. Massachusetts, however, makes no provision for family courts. For the convenience of the judge of the Boston municipal court and for the more careful consideration of domestic cases a domestic relations session of the munici-

[1] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1906, Chap. 413, Sec. 1. A wayward child is construed to mean a boy or girl between the ages of 7 and 17, who habitually associates with vicious and immoral persons or who is growing up in circumstances exposing him or her to lead an immoral, vicious or criminal life.

[2] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1906, Chap. 413, Sec. 8.

[3] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1906, Chap. 413, Sec. 7.

[4] The Judge Baker Foundation established in memory of the late Judge Harvey H. Baker of the Boston juvenile court and supported by private subscription assists the Boston juvenile court in the mental and physical examination of juvenile offenders.

[5] Delay is now eliminated in the appeal of juvenile cases by the establishment of a special juvenile session in the superior court. General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1916, Chap. 243.

pal court was established in Boston in 1912. This court, however, confines its attention to criminal prosecutions in desertion, non-support, and illegitimacy cases and has direct authority over no children except those of the unmarried mothers. Action is brought in this court against the parent for neglect or for contributing to the delinquency of a child.[1] The lack of concurrent jurisdiction with the juvenile court over neglected children handicaps the domestic relations court in these cases. It may happen that a child has been removed from his parents by the juvenile court and an action brought later in the domestic relations session against the parent for neglect. If the parent is convicted and put on probation the court has nothing upon which to work in a family already deprived of its children. On the other hand, the case against the parent in the domestic relations court may be dismissed and the parent may then make contest for the recovery of his children taken from him by the juvenile court. The creation of a single court to deal with all family questions would eliminate these conflicts in jurisdiction and would provide the proper medium for a thorough and painstaking consideration of every case.

*The Care of the Illegitimate Child*

The illegitimate child has long suffered neglect at the hands of his parents and of society. It is now a well-known fact that the infant mortality rate among babies born out of wedlock is without exception higher than that among legitimate children[2] and it is equally well known that the dependent and delinquent classes are in large measure recruited from the ranks of the illegitimate. However, the recognition of the illegitimate child as a social problem[3] and the institution of preventive measures for his benefit are of comparatively recent origin.

The illegitimate child at common law is described as *filius nullius,* the child of nobody, and as such could inherit from no one. This country, however, has done much to alter the civil status of the child born out of wedlock with reference to his relation with his mother, but until the last few years little has been done to establish the right of the illegitimate child to support by his father. The illegitimate child in Massachusetts may now inherit from his mother as if he were legitimate,[4] takes the settle-

[1] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1906, Chap. 413, Sec. 13.

[2] Lundberg, Emma O., and Lenroot, Katherine F. "Illegitimacy as a Child Welfare Problem," Part I, Children's Bureau Publication No. 66, p. 27.

[3] Ibid., p. 7.

[4] Revised Laws, Massachusetts, 1902, Chap. 133, Sec. 3-5.

ment of his mother,[1] and is in her care and custody.[2] The difficult position of the unmarried mother is recognized in this State by the provision that she may give up her child while it is less than two years of age to the Department of Public Welfare.[3] Moreover, the consent of the mother alone must be given to her child's adoption,[4] while the child is protected by the provision that a record of the fact that he is illegitimate shall at no time appear upon the papers of adoption,[5] or in his birth registration unless his status has been legally determined.[6] An illegitimate child whose parents have subsequently married and whose father has acknowledged him as his child is considered legitimate.[7]

The common law relation between an illegitimate child and his father has been altered by both English and American legislation mainly for the purpose of forcing the father to support the child.[8] These statutes, based upon the poor relief system and partaking of the nature of bastardy legislation, were introduced in America at an early period[9] and until the last few years have remained substantially unchanged. Prior to 1913 Massachusetts relied almost wholly upon principles embodied in the law of 1785 to provide for the paternal support of the illegitimate child. In 1913, however, a law was passed making it a criminal offense for a person not her husband to "get a woman with child," and providing that a man found guilty of this offense should be forced to contribute reasonably to the support of the child during his minority as if the child were his legitimate offspring.[10] Proceedings may be started in any municipal, police, or district court, or where no such court exists, before a trial justice.[11] The mother or the State Department of Public Welfare, if the mother has no settlement, may make complaint immediately after the child is conceived,[12] but the defendant is protected against blackmail by postponement of an adjudication until the mother is at least six months pregnant or until the child is born.[13] To care for the

[1] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1911, Chap. 669, Sec. 1.
[2] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1911, Chap. 669, Sec. 1.
[3] Revised Laws, Massachusetts, 1902, Chap. 83, Sec. 13.
[4] Revised Laws, Massachusetts, 1902, Chap. 154, Sec. 2.
[5] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1904, Chap. 302.
[6] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1912, Chap. 280, Sec. 2.
[7] Revised Laws, Massachusetts, 1902, Chap. 133, Sec. 5.
[8] Freund, Ernst. "Illegitimacy Laws of the United States and Certain Foreign Countries," Children's Bureau Publication No. 42, p. 25.
[9] Ibid., p. 28.
[10] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1913, Chap. 563, Sec. 6.
[11] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1913, Chap. 563, Sec. 1.
[12] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1913, Chap. 563, Sec. 1.
[13] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1913, Chap. 563, Sec. 2.

mother and child during confinement the court may order that the defendant pay a certain sum of money to the mother and for failure to comply with this order may commit the defendant to jail for contempt of court for a term not exceeding two months.[1] After the child is born the father is liable for his support and maintenance and for failure to comply may be prosecuted under the uniform desertion act of 1911.[2] If, however, the court is satisfied that no living child will be born, or that the defendant and the mother have married each other and the child has, therefore, become or will become the legitimate offspring of the defendant, or that adequate provision has been made for the maintenance of the child, the complaint may be dismissed and no further complaint can be maintained.[3] The stipulation that the court may dismiss the case if adequate provision has been made for the maintenance of the illegitimate child is open to serious abuse. Such a provision is indispensable in order that the father of an illegitimate child may make an immediate settlement for the future support of his child, but its application should be confined to cases in which the amount provided will actually support the child during his minority and should not be allowed to include settlements below such an adequate amount.

This law, although so great an improvement upon the statutes formerly in force, falls far short of providing adequate supervision for the illegitimate child. It recognizes the right of the child to the support of his father, but it fails to face squarely the proposition that the illegitimate child stands in need of the special protection of the State. Minnesota, on the other hand, has taken this radical step[4] and provides for county child welfare boards to act as guardians to all illegitimate children and to start proceedings to determine paternity. Massachusetts, however, leaves the institution of proceedings to the woman involved and makes, moreover, no provision for the public guardianship and supervision of the illegitimate child[5] while still in the care of his mother.[6]

[1] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1913, Chap. 563, Sec. 4.
[2] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1913, Chap. 563, Sec. 6-7.
[3] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1913, Chap. 563, Sec. 3.
[4] General Statutes, Minnesota, 1917, Chap. 194, Secs. 2-5.
[5] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1913, Chap. 456, provides that the father may be put on probation for a period not exceeding two years, during which time the probation officer may see that he carries out the order of the court. Subsequent to this period of probation, however, the mother must enter a complaint under the uniform desertion act if the father fails to support the illegitimate child.
[6] Revised Laws, Massachusetts, 1902, Chap. 83, Secs. 17-18, provides that any person receiving a child under three years of age for board or to secure adoption for it shall learn if possible if the child is illegitimate and if so must report the fact to the State Department of Public Welfare. The agents of the State Department of Public Welfare have the express right to enter and inspect any building if they believe an illegitimate child is mistreated therein.

No move has been made in Massachusetts to allow the father to assume the custody of his illegitimate child nor to provide that the illegitimate child shall bear the name of the father. To enforce by legislation these natural rights which, however just, are contrary to and incompatible with existing social sentiment and which, moreover, involve legal difficulties almost insurmountable, serves only to invite disrespect for the law and to promote no permanent good for the child.[1] In the majority of cases a system of public guardianship and supervision will create a happier environment for the illegitimate child than will be found in a home which an unwilling father may provide for a child towards whom he feels no natural affection.

*Administrative Agencies. The Probation System*

The probation system in Massachusetts provides a public agency for the protection of children in need of special care. Since 1906 the justice of the Boston juvenile court has been authorized to appoint two regular probation officers, and as many deputy probation officers to serve without salary as he deems desirable.[2] In 1908 the appointment of a special probation officer for juvenile offenders was provided for the Springfield police court[3] and for the first district court of Eastern Middlesex in 1912,[4] while the central district court of Worcester has possessed a similar privilege since 1907.[5] In 1908 the justices of all police, district and municipal courts whose judicial districts have a population of less than 125,000 were authorized to appoint special probation officers and volunteer deputy officers for wayward and delinquent children.[6] The State Commissioner on Probation has authority to supervise all probation work for children and to make all necessary inquiries and recommendations therefor.[7]

Although the State Commission has made constant use of its recommendatory powers to urge the appointment of special probation officers for children,[8] few courts have taken advantage of this opportunity to prevent delinquency in children. In 1918 only twenty-one such probation officers were holding office in

[1] Freund, Ernst. "Illegitimacy Laws of the United States and Certain Foreign Countries," Children's Bureau Publication No. 42, p. 58.

[2] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1906, Chap. 489, Sec. 6.

[3] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1908, Chap. 190.

[4] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1912, Chap. 664.

[5] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1907, Chap. 223.

[6] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1908, Chap. 637, Secs. 1-2.

[7] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1906, Chap. 413, Sec. 14.

[8] Annual Report of the Massachusetts Commission on Probation for 1917 (pp. 21, 22) and 1918 (p. 28).

this State.[1] Too much stress cannot be laid upon the importance to the unfortunate child of adequate probation service. It is through the probation officer that the court exercises its powers of guardianship over the child within its care and through his aid and guidance that the delinquent child is protected from commitment to a reformatory.[2] Moreover, Massachusetts law has given the court authority to deal with the wayward child[3] who has not yet committed an offense but over whom the court may exercise its supervision through the probation officer.[4] The wayward child cannot be punished, but he may be placed on probation or treated as a neglected child.[5] Little use, however, can be made of this preventive measure until every court in Massachusetts appoints an adequate number of special officers to care for juvenile offenders.

*The Overseers of the Poor, and the State Division of Child Guardianship*

The administrative government of Massachusetts is confined largely to the individual town and to the State itself, while practically no powers of administration are retained by the county units. A large part of the care of children in need of special protection therefore is in the control of small local units and is centralized through the inspection and supervision of the State Division of Child Guardianship. Upon the overseers of the poor devolves the responsibility of providing suitable homes[6] for neglected pauper children whose parents have settlements in the locality and of turning over to the State Division of Child Guardianship all such children who have no settlement within the State.[7] These local authorities, moreover, are the chief agents in the administration of the mothers' aid law and provide two-thirds of the relief given mothers with settlements within the State.

The Division of Child Guardianship of the Department of Public Welfare has assumed the functions formerly exercised by the State Board of Charity through its Department of Minor

[1] Tenth Annual Report of the Massachusetts Commission on Probation for year ending September 30, 1918 (p. 28).

[2] Spalding, Warren F. "Possibilities of the Probation System," pp. 1-7.

[3] Supra, p. 15, note 1.

[4] Ibid., p. 8.

[5] General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1906, Chap. 413, Sec. 8.

[6] Revised Laws, Massachusetts, 1902, Chap. 81, Sec. 7, as amended by General Statutes, Massachusetts, 1913, Chap. 112, Sec. 1, provides that no pauper child shall be cared for in an almshouse unless he is defective or unless he is under three years of age and his mother is an inmate and a suitable person to aid in caring for him.

[7] Revised Laws, Massachusetts, 1902, Chap. 83, Sec. 20.

Wards. Through its agents it places in homes and assumes the guardianship of all neglected children of the ages from three to twenty-one and of all pauper children who have no settlement within the State. It licenses and inspects all boarding homes for children and takes note of all illegitimate children placed out to board by other agencies. It receives as its ward the illegitimate child less than two years of age whose custody the mother wishes to relinquish and the legitimate child under three years of age for whose support his parents are unable to provide. This Department supervises the aid to mothers with dependent children and visits all children who have been placed out by public agencies.

*Possibility of Co-operation and Extension*

The existence of the probation system and of the State Division of Child Guardianship forms the nucleus for the further development of preventive work among children. It is true that the juvenile court and the mothers' aid law and the provisions for placing out of children in family homes are preventive in their nature, but it is equally true that the greater part of the remaining child welfare laws are primarily punitive and only secondarily preventive in their results. It is essential that Massachusetts should develop further the principle of public guardianship of the illegitimate child and of the offspring of arrested and divorced parents and it is equally essential that it should have, as it does have in the Division of Child Guardianship, a central agency with state-wide powers and responsibilities over all children in need of special care. Such a board in addition to its powers of guardianship over the wards of the State should serve as a clearing house for all cases in need of special protection, and should provide a bureau to which all cases should be reported and through which all other agencies could obtain information for their work. An indispensable function of this board should be to conduct research which would form the basis for future legislation extending the protective powers of the State to new groups of children found to stand in need of the exercise of this public function. Such a board should in addition co-operate with the courts and with the local units of administrative government so that the children of all unfortunate classes will have adequate and continuous supervision.

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